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## Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Struggle of the "Weried Mynde"

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SIR THOMAS WYATT AND THE STRUGGLE  
OF THE "WERIED MYNDE"

by

Susan Eichenfeld Ashton

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

June

1973

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I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Anthony LaBranche, who directed this dissertation, for his helpful criticism and encouragement. Indeed, it was Dr. LaBranche's enthusiastic classroom presentation of the poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt that first made me aware of the exciting possibilities of further study.

I would like to acknowledge also the value of the fine collection of rare books at The Newberry Library in Chicago, for without the opportunity to make use of the Vellutello edition of Petrarch, I would have been greatly hampered in my efforts.

It is appropriate, too, to comment on the usefulness of the new Kenneth Muir and Patricia Thomson edition of Wyatt's poetry. This comprehensive collection, with its valuable Commentary containing the texts of foreign works imitated by Wyatt, will undoubtedly stimulate Wyatt scholarship.

## VITA

Susan Eichenfeld Ashton was born in Chicago, Illinois on May 25, 1935. She graduated from Hyde Park High School in 1953, and attended MacMurray College in Jacksonville, Illinois, graduating with the Bachelor of Arts degree in June, 1957. She then entered the Graduate Program in English at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, where she taught freshman composition as a Graduate Assistant until she earned her Master of Arts in March, 1959. She subsequently worked in New York City for The Condé Nast Publications, Inc.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

When the poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt has attracted critical attention at all, it has been both praised and blamed for a variety of reasons, often the wrong reasons. Wyatt's role in the historical development of English verse, as the poet who introduced such forms as the sonnet, the rondeau, and terza rima into English poetry, has been emphasized, while the originality and innovativeness of his poetry have been largely neglected.

Typical of the earlier critical view of Wyatt's historical importance is that expressed by Berdan, who insists that enough of Wyatt's poetry can be proved to be translation "to justify the generalization that . . . Wyatt's main function was to introduce Italian methods to sixteenth century England."<sup>1</sup> He sees little intrinsic value in the poetry, and, less concerned about what Wyatt imitated or whether or not his poetry is autobiographical, argues that the important thing is that in his work the early Tudor period found examples of a large variety of verse

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<sup>1</sup>John M. Berdan, Early Tudor Poetry: 1485-1547 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920), p. 476.

forms, coldly but carefully worked out. It must be granted that a poet whose primary interest is in form, rather than in content, is not great. Poetic technique, clever phrase, witty conceit go a little way, but only a little way. On the other hand, the great emotions that have aroused poets from the beginning are not present in Wyatt's work. The nature in his poems is of the lion-and-tiger sort drawn from books; beauty apparently makes little appeal; and his love serves merely as the occasion to make far-fetched comparisons. This lack of emotion is apparently one of the reasons why critics call him "virile!"<sup>1</sup>

Such an evaluation seems to miss the mark in several ways. A careful study of Wyatt's poetry reveals that his interest in form is entirely related to his content and that while the emotional quality of Wyatt's poems is indeed different from that of the poetry of others, it is not because emotion is lacking, but because Wyatt's particular poetic experiment requires of the poetic speaker--and thus of the audience--a closer and more honest examination of feeling than we might look for in such early poetry.

One of the most telling, if adverse, criticisms of Wyatt's poetry is that of F. W. Bateson, who sees Wyatt as a man "imprisoned in the world of the senses," a man whose poetry fails because the "'thing' still sits in his brilliant, disturbing but unsatisfying poems, as it once sat in the minds of the subtle and brutal courtiers of Henry VIII."<sup>2</sup> What Bateson finds unsatisfying is the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 484.

<sup>2</sup>English Poetry: A Critical Introduction (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1950), p. 148.

apparent lack of resolution in so many of Wyatt's poems. Even a more recent critic finds the "uncertainty" rather troublesome and argues that

Wyatt's application of 15th-century literary conventions to something that actually happened or could have happened has been the source of two problems: one for Wyatt and one for his later readers. The first problem was inevitable since Wyatt was undoubtedly asking too much of his tools; the results were frequent uncertainty in the conclusion of poems and a kind of double standard of composition in which new perception often exists side by side in a single poem with old stance, but with no poetic frame of reference to relate them effectively.<sup>1</sup>

Yet it is precisely this quality of "uncertainty" and even of ambiguity of perception that a reader can appreciate and recognize in Wyatt as one of the elements of the Petrarchan convention he was able to exploit for his own creative needs and artistic purpose.

For Wyatt's poetry is indeed filled with the sense of unresolved struggle for balance, for stability of mind. As Donald M. Friedman remarks, Wyatt's life-long subject appears to be "the mind's quest for a serene integrity. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Throughout his poetry Wyatt longingly searches for steadfastness and freedom from change. But this stability exists only within the mind itself, and "mind," whether

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<sup>1</sup>Leonard E. Nathan, "Tradition and Newfangledness in Wyatt's 'They Fle from Me,'" ELH, XXXII (March, 1965), 15-16.

<sup>2</sup>"The Mind in the Poem: Wyatt's 'They Fle from Me,'" SEL, VII (1967), 13.



Wyatt means by the word "spirit," "consciousness," "soul," or even what we describe as "character," is always endangered by the pressures of the world outside and by its own fragility as well.<sup>1</sup> These pressures are so great and the vulnerable mind so frequently under seige that while the mind seeks balance and stability, it more often experiences confusion and uncertainty. It is this sense of motion, of the failure to create final resolution, that gives so much of Wyatt's poetry both its poignancy and vitality.

One may look at such poems as "It may be good"

(XXI)<sup>2</sup> to see this enactment of the struggle of the mind:

It may be good, like it who list,  
But I do dowbt: who can me blame?  
For oft assured yet have I myst,  
And now again I fere the same:  
The wyndy wordes, the Ies quaynt game,  
Of soden chaunge maketh me agast:  
For dred to fall I stond not fast.

Alas! I tred an endles maze  
That seketh to accorde two contraries;  
And hope still, and nothing hase,  
Imprisoned in libertes,  
As oon unhard and still that cries;  
Alwaies thursty and yet nothing I tast:  
For dred to fall I stond not fast.

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<sup>1</sup>Donald M. Friedman, "The 'Thing' in Wyatt's Mind," Essays in Criticism, XVI (October, 1966), 377.

<sup>2</sup>Quotations from Wyatt are from the Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt, ed. Kenneth Muir and Patricia Thomson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1969).

Assured, I dowbt I be not sure;  
 And should I trust to suche suretie  
 That oft hath put the prouff in vre  
 And never hath founde it trusty?  
 Nay, sir, In faith it were great folly.  
 And yet my liff thus I do wast:  
 For dred to fall I stond not fast (pp. 17-18).

Such a poem illustrates very vividly the painful trepidation and urgent craving for stability so frequently dramatized in Wyatt's poetry. The disturbing memories of the past--"oft assured yet have I myst"--and the fear for the future--"soden chaunge maketh me agast"--combine in the speaker to create an emotional paralysis. A victim of his quite justifiable fear, he becomes in fact the unwilling cause of his own probable failure--"For dred to fall I stond not fast." The speaker sees the "great folly" of trust, when his trust has proved unwarranted in the past, and yet, surprisingly, this is not the folly dramatized in the poem; instead, it is the folly and irony of his present paralysis that is most poignantly revealed in the words "my liff thus I do wast." The recognition of having no choice at all, of being bound by the past in such a way that he can respond in this fashion and no other, leaves the speaker in the most painful of predicaments: he understands his dilemma but is helpless to remedy it; he knows too much and can do too little.

The action of the poem takes place within the mind itself as it struggles for balance. And the drama

of such poetry, as Southall notes, is "psychological in the sense that it is the action of that which is within the mind, as a result of which unkindness, cruelty and sin are made to appear simply as precipitants of various states of consciousness."<sup>1</sup> The psychological complexity revealed in the poem and the poet's fine choice of language to convey that complexity blend to make "It may be good" one of the most perfect examples of Wyatt's particular poetic skill. At the same time the poem reveals as clearly as any of his original works how much Wyatt is indebted to Petrarch, the master of self-analysis and introspection. For it is clearly from Petrarch that Wyatt was able to discover how to dramatize best a lover who examines his present predicament, his past history, and his probable future, as much burdened by the contents of his mind as he is liberated by the mind's power to guide him.

The purpose of this study of the poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt is to explore the way in which his imitations of Petrarch provided him an apprenticeship in formulating his own direction and style. It will be necessary to show how his original poems--poems at least not now acknowledged to be directly or indirectly indebted to literary models--demonstrate his use of Petrarchan techniques, and also to

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond Southall, "The Personality of Sir Thomas Wyatt," Essays in Criticism, XIV (January, 1964), 44.

evaluate the particular effect of a plain style on his Petrarchan subject-matter. And, finally, it will be essential for a deeper understanding of Wyatt to examine the most important theme of Wyatt's love poetry--the search for peace of mind--in relation to his satires, letters to his son, and the prose translation The Quyetete of Mynde.

Herbert Howarth, in speculating upon what influenced and inspired Wyatt's poetry, notes that both Petrarch in his vernacular poetry and Wyatt are "artists who hammer their art out of the events of their lives."<sup>1</sup> He believes that it must have been in Petrarch that Wyatt found the courage to be an autobiographical poet, for although Wyatt and other Tudor poets turned to the age preceding their own to examine English poetry, in Chaucer they could not have found much autobiography. Reaching the Continent, however, "when the public fashion and the passion of all poets engulfed him in Petrarch, when Maurice Scève was about to go in quest of the grave where Laura lay, he found in Petrarch the sanction he needed."<sup>2</sup>

And in making use of the Alessandro Vellutello da Lucca edition of Petrarch, published in Venice in 1525, as a number of Wyatt's imitations show he must have done, he

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<sup>1</sup>"Wyatt, Spenser and the Canzone," Italica, XLI (March, 1964), 81.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

surely read Petrarch in a highly personal way, for, as Patricia Thomson notes, Vellutello had rearranged the sonnets and commented upon them in such a way as to create an extremely personal autobiographical account. The Vellutello text became in fact the most popular of the sixteenth century, with twenty-seven editions published between 1525 and 1585.<sup>1</sup> This first elaborate biography of Petrarch was the result of Vellutello's personal research in Avignon.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it "incorporated the most thorough research so far made into the lives of Petrarch and Laura as well as the most scientific investigation of the text."<sup>3</sup>

Wyatt's sense of Petrarch's Rime as a "personal" autobiographical account was undoubtedly strengthened by Vellutello's approach, and, as Wyatt's imitations frequently reveal, Vellutello's commentary was important enough to Wyatt for him to make use occasionally of the commentator's explanation or interpretation in the poem itself. And just as Vellutello uses personal judgment in determining Petrarch's "intention" or "hidden meaning" in the Rime, Wyatt also exhibits flexibility and freedom in his imitations, trying more often to re-create the spirit of

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<sup>1</sup>Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Background (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 192-93.

<sup>2</sup>Berdan, Early Tudor Poetry, p. 459.

<sup>3</sup>Patricia Thomson, "Wyatt and the Petrarchan Commentators," The Review of English Studies, New Series X (1959), 226.

Petrarch's poems than simply to duplicate the language.

The Rime apparently illustrates for Wyatt how it is possible to give poetic expression to the very problems and riddles of life that must have intrigued Wyatt as both poet and courtier. In his diplomatic service, in his relations with his king, and above all, in love or in marriage, Wyatt must have searched the minds and hearts of others to fathom their complex motives and desires. The possibility of using Petrarch's techniques of analysis to dramatize personal dilemmas would surely have excited a man as keenly interested in motivation as Wyatt's poetry reveals him to be.

In spite of the remarks of early critics who damned Wyatt for his "inferior" versions of Petrarch, it is clear that many of the imitations are highly successful in re-creating the models--whether as close translations or as remarkably free imitations--and that these imitations reveal, just as his revisions of original poems demonstrate, the way in which Wyatt worked and the kind of poetic effect he apparently sought.

And the revisions reveal a good deal. In a careful examination of Wyatt's method of revision, Hallett Smith concludes that Wyatt's main interest was not in metrical regularity but "rather in the rhetorical organization of the poem, the way in which the argument progressed, the

alteration of tone which would be most consistent with the meaning he was trying to convey."<sup>1</sup> The conclusion he draws from Wyatt's habits of revision does not support the once common suggestion that Wyatt's awkwardness and roughness were the result of his hasty composition and that he would have smoothed the lines in revision. As a reviser Wyatt was apparently much more interested in tightening up an idea, in achieving compression, even when he found it necessary to insert additional adjectives. Essentially, he revised a poem in order to improve its entire strategy. He might modify tone or make various changes in grammatical mood, often changing the position of words, not for euphony but for emphasis. The poet seems very much aware, as he looks back at his poem, "that it is spoken and dramatic, and that it takes place in a short time and carries its effects very rapidly."<sup>2</sup>

Although several critics have suggested that Wyatt's experience of Petrarch was largely responsible for the direction his own poems were to take, they have not demonstrated the validity of such an impression by any systematic study of the relationship between Wyatt's imitations and the larger body of his original poetry.

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<sup>1</sup>"The Art of Sir Thomas Wyatt," The Huntington Library Quarterly, IX (August, 1946), 331.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 332.

Rather, they have examined the effect of Petrarch on a few isolated poems, and, what is more important, they have not analyzed the particular way in which Wyatt's choice of the plain style brings to the Petrarchan subject-matter and techniques of analysis a highly individualistic and dramatically powerful effect.

Critics have suggested, however, a number of persuasive reasons for Wyatt's particular interest in Petrarch. H. A. Mason, for example, believes that Wyatt did not become a poet "in the true sense" until he turned to translation as opposed to the courtly lyric.<sup>1</sup> He sees some of Wyatt's translations as having been "made with a similar if complex purpose: primarily, perhaps in an attempt to create a vehicle for conveying strong private feelings in a public form."<sup>2</sup> Leonard Forster, in referring to Mason's theory that Wyatt's translations and imitations "express his own deeply felt emotions in identifiable circumstances," suggests that Wyatt's action can be interpreted as that "of a man feeling his way in the matter of poetic diction and finding the words of the master as appropriate to his situation as any that the state of his language allows him to formulate for himself."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Humanism and Poetry in the Early Tudor Period: An Essay (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), p. 178.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>3</sup>The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1969), p. 76.



Friedman assumes that Wyatt's original sonnets and ballades are derived from the complexities of Petrarch's self-portrait in the Rime. He argues that Wyatt was probably first attracted to the formal pattern of the sonnet by the realization that the organization of a poem could represent the movements of thought within the mind. Thus he became, Friedman asserts, the first poet since Petrarch "to imagine himself as a man living within the mental and emotional universe circumscribed by the conventions of the lyric of courtly love."<sup>1</sup>

But a study of Wyatt's use of Petrarch's "structures," such as the formal pattern of the sonnet, will not reveal the full impact of the Rime on Wyatt's adaptations from Petrarch nor on his original verse. For it is primarily in Wyatt's attempt to re-create--or even to alter imaginatively--Petrarch's tone, far more than to duplicate structure, imagery, or language, that we find the value of his poetic apprenticeship. The major lesson Wyatt learns from the Rime seems to lie in Petrarch's ability to dramatize psychological and moral complexity by employing a tone that is able to express that complexity with all the precision a speaking voice can record. This poetic power can lead Wyatt to dramatize the insights his understanding of Petrarch revealed to him: the knowledge of the confusion of time

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<sup>1</sup>Donald M. Friedman, "Wyatt's Amoris Personae," Modern Language Quarterly, XXVII (June, 1966), 138-39.

that accompanies a tortuous history of love, the burden of the lover's remembrance of the past and his fear for the future, the difficulty of maintaining emotional consistency in the face of disappointment and shame, the danger of fantasy or self-deception as the lover tries to extricate himself from his love-situation while, at the same time, he tries to preserve both his integrity and dignity.

Whatever the specific reasons for Wyatt's use of Petrarch, the results of his experience of the Rime are clear. In the sonnet sequence established by the Vellutello edition, Wyatt was able to see the way in which Petrarch could express with considerable variety his responses to the anguish and delight that accompanied his love for Laura. It seems very certain, as we examine the direction Wyatt pursues in his imitations, that he was quick to recognize and appreciate the dramatic and poetic value of still other responses to love situations. As he moved from the variations possible in imitating a poetic model, he could create numerous "sequences" of his own, sets of alternative responses, making use of the Petrarchan situation, style, and language in his own unique way in original verse, revealing the complexity of the lover's world in dramatic self-portrayals that convey the authority of experience explored and analyzed in the manner of his master.

The plain style affords Wyatt an ideal union of

form and content, for the speaker who pleads for integrity, truth, and honesty in human relationships expresses his desire for these virtues in what appears to be sincere and unrehearsed language. But Wyatt's choice of a plain style for poetic expression causes some important distinctions to arise between his own poetry and Petrarch's. As he combines Petrarchan conceits and straightforward, even homely statements, Wyatt appears to test the Petrarchan imagery and language, to measure it against the plainspoken lines in such a way that the conventional language of the Petrarchan lover reveals itself to be either inadequate for the expression of the lover's devotion or difficulty, or reveals itself to be misleading. When this combination of lines occurs, the result is not so much "un-Petrarchan" as it is "qualified-Petrarchan." For while Wyatt expresses in his poetry the courtliness and sophistication of Petrarch, he sometimes expresses as well the bluntness and vulnerability of a man who sees the love-relationship as dependent upon mutual trust and loyalty. A curious combination of a demand for "justice"--since the lover deserves the proper reward--and at the same time an acceptance, sometimes bitter or cynical, of the frailty of human devotion parallels in Wyatt the combination of plainspoken statement and Petrarchan conceit. It is this uneasy juxtaposition that so frequently reveals the difficulty of securing peace of mind or of

preserving the mind's wholeness. And adding to the sense of struggle is the realization of the poetic speaker that he is at least partly responsible for his own misfortune, since he allows himself to be drawn into this web of misery again and again, even when his knowledge of the philosophical path to the good life--as well as his own common sense--convinces him of the error of his ways.

The lover portrayed in Wyatt's poetry knows very well how fruitless and self-destructive his behavior is, but he cannot lead the rational life the philosopher advises because the very nature of love contradicts rationality. But, aware of the decrees of philosophy that can promote serenity through the constraint of his passionate thoughts, the lover suffers from his knowledge that he denies himself peace of mind. Wyatt's lover is too critical, too demanding, to be silent when he is badly treated by "love," yet he is too anxious to love and be loved to abandon his pursuit altogether. Thus we encounter the bittersweet response or ironic touch in the poetry. The lover's awareness of the rational ideal and his admittedly pitiful state give the poetry a touchingly comic quality at times. Wyatt's love poetry reveals that he sees the Petrarchan lover in a humorous as well as sympathetic light. This understanding and often ironic approach develops apparently because

Wyatt's own knowledge of moral principle and rational thought, as we can discover it in his satires, letters to his son, or The Quyetete of Mynde, exists side by side with his appreciation of the lover's world, as we recognize it in the imitations and the original verse. The satires, letters, and prose translation show the way toward the ideal goal of the rational, sane, quiet life; the love poetry records the struggle of the mind as it seeks that goal, falls short, yet continues in its struggle.

The boldness Wyatt reveals in the love poetry in his attempt to dramatize the shadows of the mind is consistent with his frankness in the other works. His writing is in fact all of a piece and creates an image of Wyatt that is as "depe-witted" and courageous as his contemporaries believed him to be. Nathan believes that the epithet of "depewitted" assigned to Wyatt by Tottel implies

extraordinary intelligence and seriousness, two of the most notable qualities that distinguish Wyatt's verse from that of his 15th-century predecessors. Indeed, the impact of his mind on the aristocratic lyric conventions created a unique poetry, unprecedented and almost impossible to emulate. Elizabethan love poets preferred their Petrarch through Surrey and Sidney. Yet Wyatt had shown them the capacity of poetic conventions to comprehend their experience.<sup>1</sup>

Wyatt's understanding of the dilemmas inherent in the relationship of lovers parallels his understanding of

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<sup>1</sup>"Tradition and Newfangelness," p. 16.

the dilemmas of life itself. In a study of Wyatt's language, one critic finds "the weight upon the concept of sureness, justness, and truth set against a greatly fickle, mutable, unstable, and death-bringing world more fully even than against the fickleness of love and lady" and notes that "the whole repeated special story of the quarrel with the lady" is part of the larger story of "the quarrel of life and death, the poise of pain and pleasure, the dere and cruell nature of human love in the mutable world."<sup>1</sup>

The lover's response to mutability becomes in "What no, perdy" (XLV) perhaps the best example we can find of Wyatt's ability to capture the continuing struggle of the lover to find peace of mind:

What no, perdy, ye may be sure!  
 Thinck not to make me to your lure,  
 With wordes and chere so contrarieng,  
 Swete and sowre contrewailing;  
 To much of it were still to endure.  
 Trouth is trayed where craft is in vre;  
 But though ye have had my hertes cure,  
 Trow ye I dote withoute ending?  
 What no, perdy!

Though that with pain I do procure  
 For to forgett that ons was pure  
 Within my hert shall still that thing,  
 Vnstable, vnsure and wavering,  
 Be in my mynde withoute recure?  
 What no, perdye! (p. 34).

Aside from the inquietude, the most important single parallel

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<sup>1</sup>Josephine Miles, Major Adjectives in English Poetry: From Wyatt to Auden (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1946), p. 329.

between this poem and "It may be good" is the role of memory in preventing the mind from finding peace. If the speaker could act on the present situation, he would have less cause for dismay: he could condemn the lady for her deception and more easily free himself from the entanglement. But while he tries "with pain" to forget, he cannot, for controlling his present emotion is the memory of his love, and it is this memory--"that thing,/ Vnstable, vnsure and wavering"--that remains in his mind to reduce his violent "What no, perdye!" to the power of futile gesture rather than action. In other poems, the remembrance of the past is indeed so powerful that its own reality is capable of challenging the present reality, making the present seem illusory, while the recollection of the past becomes the only certainty.

"What no, perdy" also illustrates several of Wyatt's favorite poetic techniques, among them the use of direct address for the expression of recrimination, recrimination tempered, however, by "wavering," resulting finally in a subtle shift in the meaning of the refrain. The shifts, the subtlety, the sense of what is only tentative within a framework of strong language--all these characteristics will require our special study.

Wyatt's poetic speaker is above all human, and his dreams, his fantasies, his defenses are all too familiar. The vulnerability of the speaker is thus linked

to the vulnerability of the reader in such a way that they are bound by the discovery of their own humanness. This is not always a happy discovery, but it is certainly a moving one, and one that makes the experience of Wyatt's poetry as precious as it is disturbing.

As Southall has recognized, Wyatt's poems give order and stability

to the preoccupation with insecurity and in doing so transform the psychological predicament, arising from the opposition between the need for security and the conditions of life as Wyatt knew them, into the literary one of giving his concern for insecurity the order and stability of art.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in his most successful poems Wyatt "fixes" for all time the most unstable and precarious of feelings. The "wavering" lines continue to broadcast their unquiet impulses, even from the now permanent and stable poem, making immutable at last the struggle of the "weried mynde."

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<sup>1</sup>"The Personality of Sir Thomas Wyatt," p. 50.



## CHAPTER II

### IN SEARCH OF A MASTER

When Wyatt immersed himself in the Rime, he discovered a rich poetic response to the struggle of life and its problems of disappointment, depression, and futility. His understanding of Petrarch, acquired largely through the apprenticeship of translation and imitation, led him to a firmer skill in handling poetic techniques, especially in matters of structure, imagery, and tone. Wyatt's translations and imitations of Petrarch may vary greatly in their faithfulness to the original organization and wording, but they all share a "closeness" to Petrarch, what has been called "a spiritual keeping-in-touch rather than a technical duplication. . . ." <sup>1</sup> Even those poems which seem to move the farthest from the original show the possibility of having been developed from what may only be suggested intellectually or emotionally as an alternative "form" or direction for the model to take.

Wyatt seems in fact to be so thoroughly absorbed

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<sup>1</sup>Anthony LaBranche, "Imitation: Getting in Touch," Modern Language Quarterly, XXXI (September, 1970), 308.

in Petrarch's total love experience as revealed in the Rime that instead of imitating isolated sonnets or songs, while "translating" one poem, he sometimes makes use of others that treat a similar aspect of Petrarch's agonized adoration. Consequently, Wyatt--seeing further implications and psychological dilemmas in nearly every poem--recognizes immediately a variety of routes for poetic expression to take. It is not that Wyatt comes to know specific poems of Petrarch; he comes to know Petrarch. And out of that closeness emerges poetry that may differ from Petrarch's a little or a lot in a line-by-line analysis, but does express very vividly Petrarch's "experience" as Wyatt realizes it in his own way.

Of course, Wyatt goes "his own way" first by choosing certain of Petrarch's poems for translation or imitation. In general, he appears to avoid poems with an abundance of classical or regional allusions, poems with considerable physical description, either of the lady or the locale, and poems incorporating an acceptance--however reluctant--of Laura's spirituality. Sergio Baldi has noted that even when Wyatt chooses to imitate poems containing such passages, he does not linger as Petrarch does "over the fragmentary stolen glimpses of his lady's beauty" nor "pause to fix moments of intense feeling by

means of exquisitely illuminated miniatures," and thus "there are no pictorial elements in his poems."<sup>1</sup> Wyatt focuses instead on sonnets that berate the lady for her hardness of heart and/or express the "vnquyet mynde" of the speaker, especially poems built on paradox, incongruity, and thus irony, in love and life.

The lack of sympathy with Petrarch's admiration of Laura's spirituality is perhaps nowhere better revealed than in Wyatt's "In Spayne" (XCVIII). Petrarch's "SI è debile il filo, a cui s'attene" (xxxvii) says the lady's lovely eyes held the keys of his thoughts while God was pleased, but Wyatt omits God entirely, and writes in lines 29-31:

Eche place doth bryng me grieff, where I do not behold  
 Those lyvely Iyes wich off my thoughtes were wont  
   the kays to hold.  
 Those thoughtes were plesaunt swete whilst I enoyed  
   that grace (p. 80).

No longer is God pleased, but the speaker himself enjoys "that grace," the lady's eyes, her presence. This difference in the temperament of the two poets is made even more obvious at the end of the poem. Petrarch tells his song to refrain from going near his lady's hand, even if she offers it; instead, it must kneel respectfully. But in Wyatt, "When she hath red and seene the dred

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<sup>1</sup>Sir Thomas Wyatt, trans. F. T. Prince, *Writers and Their Work*: No. 139 (London: Longmans Green and Company, 1961), p. 32.

wherein I sterve/ By twene her brestes she shall the put  
there shall she the reserve" (p. 82). Wyatt may be  
picking up a note of subtle humor in Petrarch, who tells  
his song to "behave itself." If so, Wyatt makes the  
most of it here in his very human ending.

Another of Wyatt's poems in which the ending  
makes of the original something highly individualistic  
and imaginative is "The piller pearisht is whearto I  
Lent" (CCXXXVI). In "ROTta è l'alta colonna, e'l uerde  
lauro" (cclxix), Petrarch mourns for both his patron  
Giovanni Colonna and for Laura. Wyatt, presumably  
mourning for his patron Cromwell, concentrates on "happe"  
that "hath rent/ Of all my ioye the vearye bark and  
rynde," an imaginative variation based upon Petrarch's  
"uerde lauro." Petrarch's final lines show amazement and  
distress that while life is beautiful, it is only an  
illusion, and in one morning we can lose what we acquired  
with great pain over many years. Wyatt writes, however,

My mynde in woe, my bodye full of smart,  
And I my self, my self alwayes to hate,  
Till dreadfull death do ease my dolefull state?  
(p. 238)

Petrarch asks, since destiny has caused my grief, what  
can I do but accept it? Wyatt's speaker asks the same  
question, but the line "And I my self, my self alwayes  
to hate" makes very clear he cannot accept it; therefore,

only death can end the pain. Whether or not this line is an expression of Wyatt's own feeling of being in some way responsible for Cromwell's death or at least his feeling of helplessness to aid him and prevent his downfall and execution is impossible to know. What we do know, however, is that Petrarch uses similar expressions in a variety of love poems, as in "IO non fu d'amar uoi lassato unquanco" (lxxxii). This is also translated by Wyatt, Petrarch's "Ma d'odiar me medesimo giunto a riuo,/ Et del continuo lagrimar so stanco"<sup>1</sup> becoming in Wyatt (IX):

Was I never, yet, of your love greeved:  
Nor never shall, while that my liff doeth last:  
But of hating myself that date is past:  
And teeres continuell sore have me weried (p. 10).

In both sonnets Wyatt seems to be impressed with Petrarch's expression of the peculiar pain that comes from recognition of its cause--death or the love of an obdurate lady--and, at the same time, his acknowledgement of how wearisome the continued rehearsal of that grief can be, even to the speaker himself. This psychological complexity seems to interest Wyatt more than does the expression of the grief. If the lady's constant refusal causes his persistent complaint, then while he says he will never tire of loving her, since he tires of his own distress, his love is

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<sup>1</sup>Le Volgari Opere del Petrarca con la  
Espositione di Alessandro Vellivtello da Lvcca (Venice:  
Fratelli da Sabio, 1525), p. 61; all quotations from  
Petrarch are from this edition.

necessarily going to be altered in some way, leading to the bittersweet response, the "qualified" pleasure.

This "qualified" response becomes in fact the basis of "Was I never, yet, of your love greeved" (IX) and once led to some confusion about Wyatt's faithfulness to the original. But D. G. Rees insists that Wyatt has been faithful to the meaning of the model since Vellutello states that in his second quatrain Petrarch is telling Laura that he is not so overwhelmed by passion that he is unable to live, and later Leopardi, a nineteenth century commentator, indicates that Petrarch does not intend to let himself be killed by Laura's hardness.<sup>1</sup> Although the commentaries may clear up uncertainty about the second quatrain, their explanations do not lead automatically to the change in the ending, a change which seriously alters the tone of the entire poem. Petrarch writes (lxxxii):

Se'n altro modo cerca d'esser satio  
Vostro sdegno; erra; e non fia quel, che crede:  
Di che amor et me stesso assai ringratio (p. 61).

For Petrarch, then, only Love and the speaker himself can be blamed for his distress, but for Wyatt this is scarcely the truth. Wyatt's highly personal reading of Petrarch apparently makes it inevitable that he recognize in Petrarch's experiences the pattern of his own love

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<sup>1</sup>"Wyatt and Petrarch," Modern Language Review, LII (July, 1957), 390.

situations. And for Wyatt the lady is not the blameless object of her suitor's unwise love; on the contrary, she is a partner who is obliged, according to Wyatt, to accept and follow rules of honesty and faithfulness. One wonders, in fact, how often in the Rime the faultfinding represents Petrarch's "truth" and how often, perhaps, the lines simply reflect his politeness, his courtliness. Wyatt, who rejects the "forms" of courtesy when the "reality" of kindness cannot be found, assigns different cause for blame:

Yf, othre wise, ye seke for to fulfill  
 Your disdain, ye erre, and shall not as ye wene:  
 And ye yourself the cause therof hath bene (p. 11).

In addition to emphasizing any contrast, as between the reward the lover deserves and the pain he actually experiences, and emphasizing as well the irony of these failed expectations, Wyatt "adjusts" even his closest translations in such a way that the emphasis will fall more dramatically on the speaker's psychological predicament. Thus, where Wyatt finds an intriguing paradox in Petrarch, he frequently attempts to sharpen it in his imitations. Wyatt's "I fynde no peace and all my warr is done" (XXVI), an adaptation of "Pace non trouo, & non ho da far guerra" (cxxxiv), appears, for example, to be a close translation except that in line eleven the "thus" expressing the cause and effect relationship is Wyatt's own, indicating that he is never interested in

saying this happened and then this, but is always seeking to dramatize how this (usually disastrous turn of events) happened because of this:

I fynde no peace and all my warr is done;  
 I fere and hope I burne and freise like yse;  
 I fley above the wynde yet can I not arrise;  
 And noght I have and all the worold I seson.  
 That loseth nor locketh holdeth me in prison  
 And holdeth me not, yet can I scape no wise;  
 Nor letteth me lyve nor dye at my devise,  
 And yet of deth it gyveth me occasion.  
 Without Iyen, I se; and withoute tong I plain;  
 I desire to perisshe and yet I aske helthe;  
 I love an othre and thus I hate my self:  
 I fede me in sorrowe and laugh in all my pain;  
 Likewise displeaseth me boeth deth and lyffe;  
 And my delite is causer of this stryff (pp. 20-21).

At the end of the poem, however, Wyatt does not address the lady, as Petrarch does--unusual for a poet as fond of direct address as Wyatt seems to be--but instead of "In questo stato son Donna per uui" (p. 29) chooses to say, "And my delite is causer of this stryff." This line really sums up the total number of paradoxical statements in the poem and is a clear reminder of the injustice created when his pain is caused by the one he loves, his "delite." In addition, the final paradox reveals more sharply and, of course, with great irony that while he calls his beloved his "delite," his entire experience is one of pain and frustration. Thus, in order to perceive that he "loves" her and that she is indeed his delight, the speaker must of necessity "reject" his admission of



the "stryff" he endures. This suggests that the paradox here--and perhaps elsewhere as well--is not merely a poetic device but is closer to an expression of the literal confusion in the lover. To be in love is to put aside one's rationality. Wyatt's interest in the lover's ability to ignore "truth" in order to keep intact his own image of reality develops further in his original poetry.

A similar pattern of making what seem at first to be only minor changes for greater sharpness or vividness in contrast emerges when we examine the way Wyatt alters "Bicause I have the still kept fro lyas and blame" (XXV), developed from Petrarch's "PERch'io t'habbia guardato di menzogna" (xl ix). Petrarch's sorrowful tears become "salt teres," suggesting a salt-in-the-wound anguish, and Wyatt's tongue "standest . . . like oon aferd," reminding us the tongue is simply doing what the speaker does, thus summing up the failure of tongue, tears, sighs in one image. Petrarch argues in the first stanza, although I have treated you with honor, you have not rendered me honor in return:

PERch'io t'habbia guardato di menzogna  
A mio potere, & honorato assai  
Ingrata lingua; gia però non m'hai  
Renduto honor; ma fatto ira & uergogna: (p. 65v)

However, Wyatt puts greater emphasis on the maliciousness of the tongue:

Bicause I have the still kept fro lyes and blame  
 And to my power alwaies have I the honoured,  
 Vnkynd tong right ill hast thou me rendred  
 For suche deserft to do me wreck and shame (p. 20).

Here the tongue repays him with pain for "suche deserft."

His next four lines further emphasize the injustice:

In nede of succour moost when that I ame  
 To aske reward, then standest thou like oon aferd  
 Alway moost cold, and if thou speke towerd  
 It is as in dreame vnperfaict and lame (p. 20).

Petrarch argues that his tongue fails him "Che quando  
 piu il tuo aiuto mi bisogna/ Per domandar mercede"  
 (p. 65<sup>v</sup>), but Wyatt needs the services of the tongue,  
 not to ask "mercy," but to seek "reward." Mercy may  
 be granted when we do not deserve such kind treatment;  
 reward is what we know we have coming. In just this one  
 change alone, Wyatt's highly personal reading of Petrarch  
 is clear. This is precisely the kind of change that has  
 led Donald L. Guss to claim that Wyatt interprets Petrarch's  
 "mistress-servant relationship in terms of distributive  
 justice" and that he

abandons Petrarch's languorous analysis for  
 rhetorical emphasis; he proclaims his merit,  
 reveals the indignities he has suffered, and  
 appeals for judgment. In close and often literal  
 translations, his personal un-Petrarchan tone is  
 a striking instance of the possibilities of  
 Petrarchan imitation.<sup>1</sup>

When Wyatt's version of Petrarch, as his "Caesar,  
 when that the traytour of Egipt" (III), appears to be a

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<sup>1</sup>John Donne, *Petrarchist* (Detroit: Wayne State  
 University Press, 1966), p. 35.

very close translation of the original, "CEsare, poi che'l traditor d'Egitto" (cii), we might ask, why the translation? It would seem that Wyatt is sympathetic to the explanation of Petrarch's sonnet, the idea of feigning good humor while feeling pain, or of attempting to conceal one's real feelings behind a mask. But once again Wyatt tries to put even greater emphasis on the contrast, changing Petrarch's final lines,

Però s'alcuna uolta i rido, o canto;  
Facciol, perch'i non ho se non quest'una  
Via da celare il mio angoscioso pianto (p. 31)

to

Whereby, if I laught, any tyme, or season  
It is for bicause I have nother way  
To cloke my care but vnder spoort and play (p. 2).

In this way the contrast of true feeling and appearance is vividly expressed in the final line, with the word "play" suggesting how truly artificial is his disguise. And this necessity of the pained lover to wear a mask leads Wyatt in the original poetry to dramatize any number of protective stances, as the lover confronts--or backs away from--his mistress or his own inner doubts.

Among those of Wyatt's imitations which seem close to the original except for isolated, rather startling changes, changes that frequently alter the entire tone of the model, is "How oft have I, my dere and cruell foo" (XXXII) from "MILLE fiate o dolce mia

guerrera" (xxi). Petrarch's final line, "Et tanto piu di uoi, quanto piu u'ama" (p. 10v), becomes in Wyatt "So shall it [the heart leaving its natural home] be great hurt vnto vs twayn,/ And yours the losse and myn the dedly pain" (p. 24). Wyatt extends the idea of the exact nature of sin and its results. Hurt, loss, pain are all suggested in Petrarch, for the more the lady refuses him, the more his heart loves her, but the actual hurt is not stated. It may be that Wyatt is recalling other instances in the Rime, such as the last line of "S'VNa fede amorosa" (ccxxiv)-- "Vostro Donna'l peccato, & mio fia'l danno" (p. 112)--or a line from "BEN mi credea" (ccvii), the poem following "S'I'L dissi mai," also imitated by Wyatt--"La colpa è uostra; et mio'l danno et la pena" (p. 106v). Interesting, too, is Wyatt's shift from the lady's guilt to her "losse." Petrarch is neither so egotistical nor so retributive. In Wyatt the lady's refusal always carries with it a loss of her own, whether she realizes it or not! And the speaker puts considerable effort into making her realize her loss.

Similar in strategy to this adjustment is the one in "Yf amours faith, an hert vnfayned" (XII), which appears to be close to the original "S'VNa fede amorosa, un cor non finto" (ccxxiv) in wording, spirit, and tone until the end. Petrarch's final line, "Vostro Donna'l peccato, & mio fia'l danno" (p. 112), becomes in Wyatt,

"Yours is the fault and myn the great annoye" (p. 12). The movement from sin to fault, and from punishment, harm, or loss to "the great annoye"--these deliberately understated words--undercuts the earlier extravagance of the description of the lover's condition, a condition so desperate it has led to the line "Ar cause that by love my self I distroye" (p. 12). Yet even this understated ending, although it creates a very different tone from the original, does not simply spring from nowhere but is in fact implicitly suggested in the model. If "amours faith, and hert vnfayned" cannot guarantee success, then what is her love worth? Perhaps no more than "great annoye" after all. Once again, it would seem that Wyatt's self-image makes it impossible for him to accept the idea that his lady's refusal is a reflection of his own unworthiness. In Petrarch, we are always able to detect the poet's unhappy knowledge that his beloved is right to refuse him. In Wyatt, there is no such belief, and, thus, rather than accept defeat as punishment for a forbidden love, Wyatt, unlike Petrarch, sees the lady as the wrong-doer.

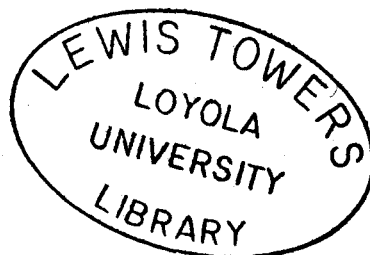
The tension between polite or courtly language and the "truth" is nowhere more dramatically revealed than in Petrarch's "S'I'L dissi mai" (ccvi) and Wyatt's free imitation of it, "Perdy I sayd hytt nott" (CLVIII). The changes we find are directly related to how far, or

how short a distance, Wyatt is willing to go in order to be diplomatic. Petrarch moves from "S'I'L dissi mai" and the appropriately extravagant punishments that would then accompany such a betrayal--Stanzas 1 through 4--to "Ma s'io nol dissi" in Stanza 5, to "Io nol dissi giamai" (p. 104<sup>v</sup>) of Stanzas 6 and 7, and the final statement of the impossibility of such a betrayal because of the power and depth of his love.

Wyatt, however, opens his imitation with an angry denial, a denial he insists that the lady must realize to be the truth:

Perdy I sayd hytt nott,  
Nor never thought to doo,  
As well as I ye wott  
I haue no powr thertoo . . . (p. 170).

Petrarch's poem has an elegance and sophistication--created by the movement from light banter to solemnity at the end--but Wyatt transforms this elegant progression into an almost homely, but solemn and moving, address. That Petrarch, too, denies ever having loved another even in the beginning of his poem is implicit in the choice of elaborate punishments he would deserve had he "said so." But he, unlike Wyatt, is willing to begin more diplomatically, to play the courtly game, until at last he can reveal the simple truth, in marvelous shining contrast:



Io nol dissi giamai; ne dir poria,  
 Per oro, o per cittadi, o per castella;  
 Vinca'l uer dunque, & si rimanga in sella;  
 E uinta a terra caggia la bugia.  
 Tu sai in me il tutto Amor: s'ella ne spia;  
 Dinne quel che dir dei:  
 I beato direi  
 Tre uolte, & quattro, & sei;  
 Chi deuendo languir si mori pria.

Per Rachel ho seruito, & non per Lia:  
 Ne con altra saprei  
 Viuer; & sosterrei,  
 Quando'l ciel ne rapella,  
 Girmen con ella in sul carro d'Helia (p. 104v).

But once Wyatt chooses to address the lady, rather than to speak of her as Petrarch does, he makes it psychologically necessary to utter his angry denial at once; either that, or he must remain silent in disappointment and anger. That his love would believe, or pretend to believe, such slander is to Wyatt an injustice he can neither ignore nor make light of with courtly extravagance, at least not until he has first blurted out the truth. Of course, once Wyatt opens with his denial, the following suppositions seem illogical. But they were never meant to be a "logical" consideration in either poem. The cruel punishments each would welcome are meant only to dramatize the depth and seriousness of their love, and thus the "impossibility" of their having been untrue. In both Petrarch and Wyatt the curses each poet would call down upon himself are in fact the miseries already endured by

the lover who is the victim of tyrannical love. But for Wyatt the courtly game is a heavy burden.

In Petrarch, the speaker seems to have moved from some initial, pained response--outside the poem--to a controlled, sophisticated defense against the accusation, moving at the end from the elaborately contrived punishments to the revelation of the uncontrived, necessary truth. Wyatt, instead, moves from the initial anger--expressed in the presence of the lady as the opening words of his poem--to a solemn, even homely listing of the punishments appropriate to such a betrayal:

And yff I dyd, ech thyng  
That may do harm or woo  
Contynually may wryng  
My hart wher so hytt goo;  
Report may alway ryng  
Off shame on me for aye,  
Yf in my hart dyd spryng  
Theys wordes that ye do say.

And yff I dyd, ech starr  
That ys in heavyn aboue  
May frown on me to mar  
The hope I haue in loue;  
And yff I dyd, such war  
As they brought in to Troy  
Bryng all my lyfe afar  
From all hys lust and joy.

And yf I dyd so say,  
The bewty that me bound  
Incesse from day to day  
More cruell to my wound,  
Wyth all the mone that may  
To playnt may turn my song;  
My lyfe may sone decay,  
Wythowt redresse my wrong (p. 170).



But at this point Wyatt's speaker rejects his "polite" argument and, forsaking courtly sophistication, which seems always to make him uncomfortable, he returns to his own accusation--the lady knows he is innocent, and thus he wants "redresse" for the unjust accusation:

Yf I be clere from thowght,  
 Why do ye then complayn?  
 Then ys thys thyng but sowght  
 To put me to more payn.  
 Then that that ye haue wrowght  
 Ye must hyt now redresse;  
 Off ryght therfore ye ought  
 Such rygor to represe.

And as I haue deseruyd,  
 So grant me now my hyer;  
 Ye kno I never swarvyd,  
 Ye never fownd me lyer.  
 For Rakhell haue I seruyd,  
 For Lya caryd I never;  
 And her I haue reseruyd  
 Wythin my hart for euer (p. 171).

Wyatt's imitation shows both sensitivity and daring. He has imagined the situation in a different context--the direct confrontation--and has made whatever adjustments seemed necessary for the full poetic dramatization of that moment. He has begun to learn the lesson of the master.

Wyatt's concern with psychological motivation is revealed also in "Suche vayn thought as wonted to myslede me" (LVI). Wyatt's line "Twixt hope and drede locking my libertie" (p. 42) anticipates the rest of Petrarch's "PIEN d'un uago penser; che mi desuia" (clxix) in which hope appears but cannot be trusted because of past suffering.

Petrarch's sonnet ends with the speaker unable to express his misery--"Tanto gliho a dir, che'ncominciar non oso" (p. 91)--but Wyatt changes this to show more clearly the reason why. Since the lady's armed sighs "stoppe" his way "twixt hope and drede" and thus lock his "libertie," then even when he can "gesse" he sees a look of pity in her expression, he is not bold enough to speak because his "libertie" is still imprisoned by her disdain. Wyatt is primarily interested, it would seem, in dramatizing what he believes to be the "exact" emotional or psychological relationships.

His awareness of the complexity of a situation is clearly dramatized, too, in "The longe love, that in my thought doeth harbar" (IV). The first stanza is close to Petrarch's "AMOR; che nel pensier mio uiue et regna" (cxl), but the felicitous expression "longe love" is Wyatt's own. Love is armed and shows his insignia on the forehead in Petrarch, but Wyatt chooses to ignore the armor and concentrate instead on the banner. This change is effective in that the entire poem dramatizes how easily frightened love is, and the omission of "armed" sustains this impression of vulnerability, an impression developed also by the flight to the "hertes forrest." Wyatt's variation of Petrarch's final question helps establish the tone of the entire poem. Petrarch asks, what can I do, fearing my master, but stay

with him (love) until the final hour, since he ends well who dies loving well? But Wyatt writes:

What may I do when my maister fereth  
But, in the felde, with him to lyve and dye?  
For goode is the liff, ending faithfully (p. 3).

Vellutello's commentary explains that the poet says the one who dies loving, ends well, for one who has all the virtues in the heart, and lives with virtue, cannot end sadly (pp. 41-41<sup>v</sup>). Wyatt expresses this idea of a virtuous faithfulness, making his own poem closer in spirit to Vellutello's interpretation than to the original text. While in Petrarch the emphasis is on "ben amando," the implication that the "lovingness" is somehow virtuous in itself (and thus the proper end to life) or even a fulfillment of an obligation is certainly available for interpretation, even though it may not be the only possible way of reading the original. That Wyatt should prefer to interpret Petrarch in this way probably reveals Wyatt's own feelings about love and faithfulness, but it is possible he is also making use here of his familiarity with other poems in the Rime in which Petrarch explores the significance of his prolonged and futile love and its relation to his own wished-for death. His "BEN mi credea passar mio tempo homai" (ccvii), following "S'I'L dissi mai," may have suggested to Wyatt both the field imagery and the necessity to die well. In this song Petrarch asks

Love to cause his death:

Tu hai li strali et l'arco:  
Fa di tua man, non pur bramando, i mora:  
Ch'un bel morir tutta la uita honora (p. 106v).

And he ends the song, saying,

Canzon mia fermo in campo  
Starò: che gliè disnor, morir fuggendo:  
Et me stesso riprendo  
Di tai lamenti . . . (p. 107).

It seems quite possible that Wyatt saw this image of remaining firm in the field as being especially appropriate in his imitation of "AMOR; che nel pensier mio uiue et regna," where the campaign-field scene is created in Petrarch's first stanza. The imagery is indeed highly ironic, for the "longe love" is ill-prepared to do battle.

Wyatt's omissions are frequently as telling as his "improvements" or additions. Both Wyatt's "Behold, love, thy power how she dispiseth!" (I) and Petrarch's "Hor uedi amor, che giovenetta donna" (cxxi) address "Love," but Wyatt uses the stronger "Behold, love," which he makes the refrain of each stanza:

Behold, love, thy power how she dispiseth!  
My great payne how litle she regardeth!  
The holy oth, wherof she taketh no cure  
Broken she hath: and yet she bideth sure,  
Right at her ease: and litle she dredeth.  
Wepened thou art: and she vnarmed sitteth:  
To the disdaynfull, her liff she ledeth:  
To me spitefull, withoute cause, or mesure.  
Behold, love!

I ame in hold: if pitie the meveth,  
 Goo bend thy bowe: that stony hertes breketh:  
 And, with some stroke, revenge the displeasure  
 Of thee and him, that sorrowe doeth endure,  
 And, as his lorde, the lowly entreath.  
 Behold, love! (p. 1).

While Petrarch's lady is guilty of not caring about his pain, Wyatt's has actually broken an oath, an oath suggested, however, in Petrarch's reference to Laura's disdain for Love's "regno." Petrarch's contrast between weaponed Love and this mere girl in gown and braid sitting barefoot in the grass--a marvelously ironic description since this slight creature holds Love and her lover in her power--is compressed in Wyatt, without the physical image, which seems unimportant to him. He is concerned almost entirely with her moral error in breaking the oath. There is no point in making her physically attractive when she is morally "unattractive."

Wyatt also puts greater emphasis on the miseries of the lover in telling Love to "revenge the displeasure/ Of thee and him, that sorrowe doeth endure." In Petrarch, even though the lover complains of the lady's hardness, there is wry humor in the irony of such power in the young girl to defy love. But in Wyatt this playful, gentle tone is gone entirely, and the emphasis is on her immoral spite and his unjust suffering. The only playfulness must be the reader's (and perhaps the poet's) who

realizes that the speaker's complaint-charge is somehow more bombastic than the situation really warrants. That Wyatt chooses this imitation to be the opening poem of the Egerton Manuscript suggests that he may have intended it to set the tone for the following poems. Indeed it is very appropriately followed by "What vailleth trouth?" and lends support to the critical view that Wyatt often interprets Petrarch's love experience in terms of "distributive justice."

In "O goodely hand" (LXXXVI), an imitation of "O BELla man" (cxcix), Wyatt also plays upon the excess of feeling in the speaker. In Petrarch the speaker enjoys the fact that the lady holds his heart in her hand, even longs for the touch of her bare hand, but finally he must restore the theft (her hand), and very extravagantly complains, "O inconstantia de l'humane cose" (p. 48). Wyatt develops the conceit differently, moving from the initial fancy of his heart in her hand to a plea to the lady to "consent at last" to love him, since she already holds his heart,

And if not so,  
Then with more woo  
Enforce thiself to strayne  
This simple hert  
That suffereth smart,  
And rid it owte of payne (p. 66).

Yet, even while Wyatt's tone is not identical to Petrarch's, the poem is an extension of the model. If the heart must

lose the "Bella man" in Petrarch, the speaker will suffer. Well, what other alternative is there? The speaker must carry the conceit to its ultimate conclusion: if the hand won't bring love, then use it to put the heart out of its pain.

This possibility of an imitation being built on alternatives different from the original but certainly suggested by the model is illustrated also by Wyatt's "Off Cartage he that worthie warrier" (LXXXI). It would seem that "VINse Hanibal" (ciii) impresses Wyatt not so much for its personal note of warning to Stefano Colonna, but primarily for its expression of the dilemma of winning and yet not winning, not being able to enjoy the fruits of victory. In Petrarch, the advice is to do what is required, to do one's duty, for the sake of fame, perhaps. Wyatt writes not a prediction, however, but a description of his current distress, and he finds no consolation for not being able to use his "chaunce." Unlike Petrarch, who can encourage Colonna with the promise of a reward--"dopo la morte anchora/ Mille e mill'anni al mondo honore et fama" (p. 185)--Wyatt complains, "At Mountzon thus I restles rest in Spayne" (p. 60). Wyatt seems to have found the personal dilemma Petrarch predicts for Colonna to be very much suited to his own situation in Spain, where both his public duties and private affairs were sources of great frustration. Wyatt

is much more concerned with the present, with real rewards in life on earth; thus his poem reveals a very human lover longing for physical nearness and pleasure.

Wyatt's imitation of "Orso al uostro destrier si po ben porre" (xcviii) reveals a similar pattern of change. While Petrarch addresses Orso, Count of Anguillara, and advises him, Wyatt in "Though I my self be bridilled of my mynde" (XXVII) applies the situation to himself and addresses his own heart. Imitating the sonnet in this highly personal way reveals Wyatt's sensitivity to the Rime, for Petrarch's advice to Orso, depending as it does on his own knowledge of the heart and its suffering, is also a highly personal statement. Petrarch's recognition of Orso's distress at not being able to see his beloved evolves from the poet's understanding of his own love. Also characteristic of Wyatt's very personal reading is his application of the war-horse imagery. Petrarch uses the horse and bit image to dramatize for Orso the difference between the horse that can be controlled and the heart that cannot be constrained. In Wyatt, however, the contrast becomes:

Though I my self be bridilled of my mynde,  
 Retorning me backward by force expresse,  
 If thou seke honour to kepe thy promes,  
 Who may the hold, my hert, but thou thy self vnbynd?  
 (p. 21)

The "bridilled" mind and its relation to the wayward heart



is important in many of Wyatt's poems, where the mind is often imprisoned, forever "weried" by the contemplation of how futile is the heart's pursuit of the beloved.

The theme of the unquiet mind, a mind torn between acceptance of defeat and desire to hold on to whatever tiny, even imagined, hope might remain is treated also in Petrarch's "MIrando'l sol de begliocchi sereno" (clxxlii) and in Wyatt's imitation of it, "Auysing the bright bemes of these fayer Iyes" (XXIX), a sonnet surrounded in the Egerton Manuscript by poems dramatizing the troubled or divided mind: "I fynde no peace" (XXVI), "Though I my self be bridilled" (XXVII), "Ever my happe is slack and slo" (XXX), and "Love and fortune and my mynde, remembre" (XXXI). In "Auysing the bright bemes" (XXIX) Wyatt once again dramatizes the way in which the mind's past disappointments can affect the future responses of the too-troubled mind. In Petrarch it is the soul that is weary, but for Wyatt the "werid mynde" is "in suche extremitie brought" that

In frossen thought nowe and nowe it stondeth in flame;  
Twyst misery and welth, twist earnest and game;  
But few glad and many a dyvers thought;  
With sore repentaunce of his hardines:  
Of suche a rote commeth ffruyte fruytles (p. 22).

Wyatt's inclination to incorporate images or ideas from the commentary into his imitations, as well as his frequent use of related imagery or language from one sonnet while "translating" another, suggests an attitude toward

the model that is both highly competitive and personal. If, in Wyatt's view, Petrarch has said it better in some other poem, then why not use that "improved" version? After all, Wyatt does not have to avoid repetition; he is not imitating all the sonnets. What seems most important to him is getting it right, using the best possible expression, whether Petrarch himself has used it elsewhere or only implied it--making it necessary for a commentator to "explain"--or whether Wyatt must provide his own improvements.

The puzzling changes in Wyatt's "The lyvely sperkes that issue from those Iyes" (XLVII), for example--a free imitation of "Vlue fauille uscian de duo bei lumi" (cclviii)--may be accounted for by both Vellutello's interpretation and by Wyatt's reading of other sonnets of the Rime. In the model Petrarch describes the radiance of Laura's eyes and the memory of how that gaze turned to an habitual frown, thus leaving him caught between fear and hope (the frown and her sweet gaze). But Wyatt writes:

The lyvely sperkes that issue from those Iyes  
 Against the which ne vailleth no defence  
 Have prest myn hert and done it none offence  
 With qwaking pleasure more then ons or twise.  
 Was never man could any thing devise  
 The sonne bemes to torne with so great vehemence,  
 To dase mans sight as by their bright presence.  
 Dased ame I much like vnto the gyse  
 Of one I-stricken with dynt of lightening,  
 Blynded with the stroke, erryng here and there,  
 So call I for helpe, I not when ne where,  
 The pain of my fal patiently bering:  
 For after the blase, as is no wounder,  
 Of dedly nay here I the ferefull thoundere (p. 35).

Wyatt's use of "dedly nay" is the result of Vellutello's explanation of Petrarch's dilemma, his claim that the poet "fu spesse uolte tra'l si e'l no d'abandonarlo & partir da lui, credendosi all a uera & non all a imaginata" (p. 82). The gaze-lightning image added by Wyatt is perfectly consistent with Petrarch's imagery elsewhere. In his "PERsequendomi amor al luogo usato" (cx), for example, the consuming rays of his beloved's eyes so affect him that the sonnet ends:

Come col balenar tona in un punto;  
Così fu io da begliocchi lucenti,  
Et d'un dolce saluto insieme aggiunto (p. 25v).

Still another difference exists in Wyatt's imitation, though, in the sense of time. Petrarch's "Vlue fauille" is primarily a recollection of anguish--expressed in the past tense--but Wyatt uses the past and present miseries in the model to describe his present distress--in the present tense--and to anticipate future "qwaking" in the last lines of his imitation. Wyatt's imitations have an immediacy, a sense of the speaker caught in the very moment of crisis, before he has any time to sort things out in his own mind and perhaps put them into some perspective he can live with. While Petrarch's sonnets reflect a calm that might be possible later, Wyatt's speaker hasn't got that far!

Wyatt's imitation of "O CAMeretta; che già fosti

"un porto" (ccxxxiv), a poem that also shows Petrarch's ability to express his knowledge of the way the past can plague the present, reveals a similar development from the original. For Petrarch, the contrast exists between the room that used to be a harbor and is now, because of the speaker's devastating woes, a room filled with fears. Petrarch's organization is largely chronological. But in "The restfull place, Revyver of my smarte" (CLXXXVII) Wyatt, absorbing the chronology and moving then to a position which already holds all possibilities of feeling--past, present, future--makes the paradox an immediate one. The room is now at once the "restfull place" and "Revyver of my smarte." Wyatt achieves this immediacy by putting the paradoxical contrast into each individual line:

The labors salve incressyng my sorow,  
The body ese and trobler off my hart,  
Quieter of mynd and my vnquiet foo . . . (p. 197).

This is a particularly provocative development from the original idea and emotion: now the past experience becomes so much a part of the present that both responses are clearly present at the same time. The feelings are not separated by time, but are held in the mind in troubling proximity. This ambivalence is more complex--and thus more interesting--than the model.

Several of Wyatt's free imitations reveal important changes in structure, in the basic strategy of the poem, as

opposed to changes of detailed images or specific lines. Such structural changes occur in "Playn ye, myn eyes, accompany my hart" (CCXLII), developed from "OCchi piangete; accompagnate il core" (lxxxiv). Petrarch's sonnet is in the form of a dialogue, the second half of each quatrain and of the sestet in the words of the eyes, defending themselves by blaming the heart. Wyatt abandons the "response" of the eyes and strengthens the argument against them. It is difficult to know what prompted Wyatt to take this approach. Perhaps he considered the argument put forward by the eyes to be too clever, too specious, and thus he ignores it. Wyatt rather uncharacteristically, however, misses an opportunity for an argumentative dialogue and develops instead--and this also is unusual--the physical description of the eyes:

Wet shall ye be--ye shall yt not withstand--  
 With weeping teares that shall make dymm your sight,  
 And mistie clowdes shall hang still in your light.  
 Blame but your selves that kyndyld have this brand,  
 With such desire to straine that past your might.  
 But synce by yow the hart hathe cawght his harme,  
 His flamed heate shall sometyme make ye warme (p. 241).

In Petrarch the eyes have the final word, demanding justice and expressing anger for being blamed for the heart's offense, but in Wyatt the poem ends with the prediction--to insure justice--that the burning heart will sometyme make the eyes "warme." Wyatt's speaker always wants to have the last word, a rather ironic wish, for each new

injustice--or the same old one--will prompt a new argument and another "last" word.

Wyatt makes structural changes also in "Wyll ye se what wonders love hathe wrought?" (CCXXXII), created from only the first two stanzas of Petrarch's "QVAL piu diuersa et noua" (cxxxv). He ignores Petrarch's next four stanzas that describe other natural phenomena to which his love experience can be compared: a gentle, wild beast, the sight of whom destroys all men (his love, who draws him by her eyes); a fountain that boils and freezes (like his love, burning in the night and freezing in the presence of his beloved), etc. In using only the first two images of the model--the phoenix and the magnetic rock--and in reversing their order so that the magnetic rock is described first, Wyatt seems to be putting greater emphasis on the paradoxical aspect of his love's renewing itself, even after he is drawn to his death on the deadly rock.

"Goo burnyng sighes Vnto the frosen hert!" (XX), an adaptation of "ITE caldi sospiri al freddo core" (cliii), is one of Wyatt's most imaginative imitations. The poem begins as a fairly close translation, but Wyatt then departs from the model, expanding Petrarch's "prayer" of the first quatrain and omitting the second quatrain, where the poet sends loving "thoughts" in a further attempt to

warm the frozen heart:

Take with the payne wherof I have my part,  
And eke the flame from which I cannot stert  
And leve me then in rest, I you require:  
Goo burning sighes!

I must goo worke, I se, by craft and art,  
For trueth and faith in her is laide apart;  
Alas, I cannot therefore assaill her  
With pitefull plaint and scalding fyer,  
That oute of my brest doeth straynably stert:  
Goo burning sighes! (pp. 16-17)

Yet here too the "twist" is perhaps suggested in the original. Even though Petrarch ends with the admission that "our" state--that of sighs and thoughts--is unquiet, while the lady's is serene and peaceful, he is able to end on a somewhat hopeful note: "Go," because Love comes with us and wicked fortune may be less some other time. But Wyatt assumes wicked fortune to be the lady's bad behavior, and, rather than await a change that will never come, Wyatt's speaker plans a different, less passive strategy. He must use craft and art, not truth or love, since the lady will not respond to those qualities. It is no wonder that Donald Guss sees love in Wyatt's poems as "a relation in which the right-dealing man is open to injury, naked to treachery and malice."<sup>1</sup>

Thus Wyatt's final "Goo burning sighes!" is like Petrarch's ending in that both "sighes" are defeated, but while Petrarch sees this as a temporary setback, Wyatt

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<sup>1</sup>John Donne, Petrarchist, p. 39.

knows too well the predictable ending. It seems almost as if Wyatt's response to the Rime is such that no matter how often Petrarch may see some glimmer of hope for his love, Wyatt knows better. Petrarch's sonnets and songs, while revised and polished in later years, are still, after all, a record of the various stages of his love, its infrequent hopefulness as well as its more often recorded despair. But Wyatt seems to have felt from his very personal reading of the Rime the total sense of futility which the individual poems combine to create. In imitating an individual sonnet, Wyatt's knowledge of how that one episode ends may lead him to incorporate the tone of the ending into his opening lines. Similarly, his total experience of Petrarch makes it impossible for him to express hope in the way Petrarch sometimes does. Wyatt knows how it all ends, and his knowledge of this--and undoubtedly his own experiences in love and in King Henry's court--colors every translation and imitation.

One of Wyatt's most successful poems illustrates very well how the combined impact of the Rime and Wyatt's own emotional and moral responses to life can create poetry that needs no apology for being imitative. One critic comments that it is not that Wyatt used Petrarch for "Who so list to hounte" (VII) that is important, nor even that this is one of Wyatt's most popular sonnets,



but that its importance lies in what Wyatt did to "make his sonnet unique and memorable and Petrarch's scarcely distinguishable from its frigid companions."<sup>1</sup> "Who so list to hounte" has, of course, been discussed by numerous critics, and the detailed changes are obvious: Wyatt omits entirely the description of "VNA candida cerua" (cxc), who becomes simply "an hynde," he omits also the physical description of the forest scene, and he alters "My Caesar's will has been to make me free" to "' . . . for Cesars I ame,/ And wylde for to hold though I seme tame'" (p. 5). But more important than these details is the alteration of the entire situation and the tone of the sonnet. Guss suggests that Wyatt's changes from narrative to direct address, from "pictorial symbolism" to irony, and from "elevated mystery to bitter common sense" reveal "his injured but scornful rectitude."<sup>2</sup> In place of the

shores, the sun, and the season, which symbolize life as a brief passage through a sweet country, Wyatt substitutes a hunter's exhaustion, implying a social context and a desire for earthly success. By such means Wyatt adapts the structure of Petrarch's sonnet to his own theme, the "vayne travaill" he has undergone for a reward that has been taken by others.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>H. M. Richmond, The School of Love: The Evolution of the Stuart Love Lyric (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 281.

<sup>2</sup>John Donne, Petrarchist, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

But the "hunter's exhaustion" is not so far removed from Petrarch as we might suppose. The forest scene with its hunt imagery is used frequently enough in the Rime for Wyatt to have been influenced by other poems in his imitation of "VNA candida." In "I DOLci colli; ou'io lasciai me stesso" (ccix), for example, Petrarch depicts a scene similar to Wyatt's, and what is more important, reveals a tone more closely in touch with "Who so list to hounte." In the second quatrain of this sonnet, Petrarch expresses his amazement at the stubborn way he continues in love:

Meco di me mi merauiglio spesso;  
Ch'i pur uo sempre; et non son anchor mosso  
Dal bel giogo piu uolte indarno scosso;  
Ma com' piu me n'allungo, et piu m'appresso:

And in the sestet, he compares himself to a wounded deer:

Et qual ceruo ferito di saetta,  
Col ferro auelenato dentr'al fianco  
Fugge, et piu duolsi, quanto piu s'affretta;

Tal io con quello stral dal lato manco;  
Che mi consuma, et parte mi diletta;  
De duol me struggo, et di fuggir mi stanco (p. 115<sup>v</sup>).

To a poet as suggestible as Wyatt, Petrarch's inability to break the yoke, his faintness, his weariness with the flight, can easily lead to the transformation in "Who so list to hounte." Petrarch may describe himself as the deer, but Wyatt's wearied "hunter" is clearly also the victim of the chase. Thus the dream world of "VNA candida" becomes the nightmare vision in Wyatt. In Petrarch the

speaker's tone is one of amazement that so much time has passed--from sunrise to the noon of his life--and he has fallen now into the stream (so he has not come very far!) and the image is gone. It is as if this has been a remarkable and lovely illusion, only a dream that ends, as dreams do, when he awakens. But in Wyatt the speaker is not the only pursuer--"I ame of theim that farthest cometh behinde" (p. 5), ironically the last of the pack!

Yet the basic difference, the one which accounts most for significant change in meaning and tone, is in structure. Petrarch moves from a description of his vision of the doe, the time, the setting, to the reason he followed her (the sweet disdain of her appearance), to the collar of topaz and diamonds, signifying she is not to be pursued, to, finally, the time, the setting, his weariness, and her disappearance. In Wyatt, however, the first two lines tell us where to find " . . . an hynde;/ But as for me, helas, I may no more." His explanation follows immediately--"The vayne travaill hath weried me so sore,/ I ame of theim that farthest cometh behinde." But he is still following:

Yet may I by no meanes my weried mynde  
 Drawe from the Diere: but as she fleeth afore,  
 Faynting I folowe . . . (p. 5).

The speaker then offers another reason not to follow: "I leve of therefore,/ Sithens in a nett I seke to hold the



mind, appearing as it does near the end of the Egerton Manuscript, comes as a somber revelation, a sad awareness of the irrationality of love and its painful consequences. Such moments of pained revelation require for poetic expression both precision and delicacy of tone.

That Wyatt finds in Petrarch such insight into mastery of tone seems clear when we consider how many of the imitations, no matter how frequently they depart from the original in particular imagery or allusion, attempt to duplicate the voice of Petrarch's speaker, to render the exact "gesture."

Wyatt's "Me list no more to sing" (CCX) is apparently not regarded as being indebted to Petrarch, but it bears, nevertheless, some striking resemblances to "MAI non uo piu cantare, com'io soleua" (cv), and it also illustrates Wyatt's attempt to create the tone of the model. The most obvious similarity is in the rhythm of the two songs. Petrarch writes:

MAI non uo piu cantare, com'io soleua:  
Ch'altri non m'intendeua; ond'hebbi scorno:  
Et puossi in bel soggiorno esser molesto.  
Il sempre sospirare nulla rileua.  
Gia su per l'alpi neua d'ogn'intorno . . . (p. 179<sup>v</sup>).

And Wyatt:

Me list no more to sing  
Of love nor of suche thing,  
Howe sore that yt me wring;  
For what I song or spake  
Men dede my songis mistake (pp. 215-16).

Petrarch's song is discursive, personal, even private, and Wyatt imitates these qualities successfully. Petrarch begins with his announcement that he no longer wants to sing, as he has in the past, because Laura has not responded to him--his sighs are thus as useless as snow upon snow in the Alps. Stanza 2 describes his distress; Stanza 3 recalls the old proverb, "Love who loves you." But his own "sense," unlike proverbial wisdom, has led him to a different life in search of ideal love. Stanza 4 berates those who fail to understand him and praises his own path, leading to Stanza 5, an appreciation of the eloquent beauty of silence and the prediction that death will end his pain. Stanza 6, the last, expresses thanks that his love and lament have at last quieted the contempt of those who earlier denounced him. He will become the example of Love.

Wyatt opens with a similar pronouncement, but then presents his case against singing for those who are too slow to grasp his meaning. There is something here of the tone of Petrarch's "*Intendami chi po; ch'i m'intend'io*" (p. 181). Wyatt omits most of the distress and futility Petrarch feels and instead sings (Stanzas 3, 4, and 5) in praise of his unappreciated songs:

What vailith then to skippe  
At fructe over the lippe?  
For frute withouten taste  
Dothe noght but rott and waste.

What vailith vndre kaye  
 To kepe treasure alwaye.  
 That never shall se daye?  
 Yf yt be not vsid  
 Yt ys but abusid.

What vayleth the flowre  
 To stond still and wither?  
 Yf no man yt savour  
 Yt servis onlye for sight  
 And fadith towardes night (p. 216).

Then he goes on to introduce his own proverb, a proverb that like Petrarch's represents wisdom only to those who lack imagination and courage and thus are too feeble to value what others do not praise:

Therefore fere not t'assaye  
 To gadre ye that maye  
 The flower that this daye  
 Is fresher than the next:  
 Marke well, I saye, this text (p. 216).

And if Wyatt's own wisdom is ignored, so much the worse for the audience:

Yf this be undre miste,  
 And not well playnlye wyste,  
 Vndrestonde me who lyste;  
 For I reke not a bene,  
 I wott what I doo meane (p. 217).

Wyatt duplicates here with great success the tone of Petrarch's third stanza and may be influenced by the fig image in creating his own "reke not a bene" barb:

Prouerbio, ama chi t'ama, è fatto antico.  
 I so ben quel, ch'io dico. hor lassa andare:  
 Che conuen, ch'altri impare a le sue spese.  
 Vn humil donna grama un dolce amico.  
 Mal si conosce il fico . . . (p. 182).

The personal, almost belligerent, tone--I mean what I say; if you do not understand, let it pass--is very much the same in both songs. The fact that Wyatt can ignore many details and can try instead to imitate the speaker's tone, his manner--even a shrug of the shoulders--rather than his specific examples or choice of words shows how close Wyatt feels to the experience of Petrarch's song.

It is clear then that an analysis of Wyatt's use of Petrarch's "structures" alone will not reveal the full impact of the Rime on Wyatt's imitations nor upon his original poetry. Yet Patricia Thomson says Wyatt "fairly consistently simplifies Petrarch: he selects a single theme from poems that have several, or he develops a single image into a sustained conceit often different in implication from the original."<sup>1</sup> But while Wyatt may simplify the "rhetorical" aspects of a poem, he rarely simplifies the thought or emotion he finds there, primarily because his own sense of values makes it impossible for him to do so. In re-creating Petrarch's long history of unrequited love, Wyatt discovers certain psychological complexities. His speaker is usually confronted with a situation in which he must plead for justice, at the same time realizing his pleas will probably be of no use. Now the speaker who

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<sup>1</sup>"The First English Petrarchans," Huntington Library Quarterly, XXII (February, 1959), 96.



expects defeat, but who cannot see earthly defeat as a spiritual victory, assumes a very special attitude, a tone of voice that suggests an edge of resentment, even while he "professes" love. And a speaker who "pleads" with his mistress to accept his love "Off ryght" and who argues, "Grant me now my hyer" is hardly pleading at all. He is insisting upon proper conduct based upon faithfulness and trust in human relationships. Guss sees as the "fundamental ethical principle" in Wyatt's Petrarchan poems "his reliance upon honesty and justice rather than on sentimental refinement--his consideration of Petrarchan love as a problem of meritorious service ill-rewarded."<sup>1</sup> Baldi finds this reliance particularly objectionable and argues that in spite of Wyatt's considerable analysis of love, he gives us "no genuine meditation" on its nature, since for him love becomes the basis of "a theory of rights." Thus Baldi sees the sufferings of Petrarch's "QVEL antiquo mio dolce empio signore" (ccclx) as having no spiritual value for Wyatt in "Myne olde dere En'mye, my froward master" (VIII), becoming instead "only a tax or penalty which he would be content to pay, however high, if he were sure of having the reward that should justly follow."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Donald L. Guss, "Wyatt's Petrarchism: An Instance of Creative Imitation in the Renaissance," Huntington Library Quarterly, XXIX (November, 1965), 8.

<sup>2</sup>Sir Thomas Wyatt, pp. 22-23.

But a preoccupation with "rights" does not indicate, as Baldi seems to think, that Wyatt refuses to acknowledge love's irrationality. Quite the contrary is true. Again and again his imitations reveal that he fully recognizes the irrational nature of love, but he stubbornly refuses to accept its irrationality as his guiding principle. His "meditation" thus becomes an analysis not of the nature of love, but of a lover who finds himself enmeshed in a system of values he is unwilling to accept without the rule of justice. So each response to love will be an ambivalent one in which the speaker's disappointments weigh upon him more heavily than his meager confidence in love's promises can bear. He can continue in love only if he tries to ignore the lessons of the past and his justifiable fears for the future. But, of course, he cannot ignore these burdens of the mind; his memory will never allow it. Consequently, Wyatt's speaker either vacillates weakly before his "choices," or he protests too vigorously the wrongfulness of his mistress, hoping in some way to quiet the persistent voice within him by shouting down the sounds of others.

Thus, having learned through his imitations of Petrarch how to reveal the complexity of the lover's world, Wyatt could experiment in his original verse with structure, language, imagery, and especially with tone in order to make

his own highly personal poetic statements. Such "statements" or dramatic self-portrayals could convey the authority not simply of experience that is deeply felt, but of experience that is carefully, sometimes painfully, analyzed as well. Certain now of his poetic ability to express inner debate and doubt, Wyatt could proceed from his apprenticeship to real competition, making use of both his perfected techniques and his heightened sensibility to create songs and sonnets to rival those of his master.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE LESSON LEARNED

Wyatt's original poetry reveals the influence of Petrarch in a variety of ways. Some poems seem quite close to Petrarch's sonnets and songs in language or in imagery, while others are close mainly in their analysis of attitude or development of tone. In the Rime Petrarch analyzes each response in his long history of unhappy love--recording his impatience and agony before Laura's death and his uneasy resignation and remorse afterward. Wyatt, making use of his own experiences of love, apparently needs to broaden the range of experience, if not the intensity. He not only waits, but sometimes wins; he may be forsaken, or he may be the one to walk away, more often than not in anger. The richness of response in the Rime, which undoubtedly encouraged Wyatt in his imitations, provides him in his original verse a "method" as much as it provides subject "matter." We can see that just as Petrarch was able to explore every nuance of feeling in his own love situation, Wyatt succeeds in giving poetic expression to the wealth of response--sometimes

contradictory--that attended his own stages of pursuit of love, or even his reluctant retreat from it.

Wyatt's use of Petrarchan language and imagery can result in poems that only vaguely echo Petrarch or in poems that appear to be almost an itemized collection of Wyatt's favorite conceits. In a recent study statistics indicated that only a five percent overall difference exists in vocabulary root sources between Wyatt's translations and imitations and his original poetry.<sup>1</sup> This study would seem to support the critical view that Wyatt quite consciously emulated Petrarch in the composition of his own poetry, revealing in poem after poem how thoroughly he had absorbed Petrarch's manner and expression. Among the poems where Petrarchan imagery abounds is CXCIII:

So vnwarely was never no man cawght  
With stedefast loke apon a goodly face,  
As I of late; for sodenly me thowght  
My hart was torne owte of hys place.

Thorow myn Iye the strock frome hyrs dyd slyde,  
Dyrectly downe vnto my hert ytt ranne;  
In helpe wherof the blood therto dyd glyde,  
And left my face both pale and wanne.

Then was I leke a manne for woo amasyd,  
Or leke the byrde that flyeth in to the fyer;  
For whyll that I vpon her beaulte gasyd  
The more I burnt in my desyre.

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<sup>1</sup>Alice Bradley Griffin, "The Language of Sir Thomas Wyatt," Dissertation Abstracts, XXVI (1965), 3316.

Anon the blowd stert in my face agayne,  
 Enflamde with hete that yt had att my hart,  
 And browght therwith thorowt in euery vayne  
 A quakyng hete with plesaunt smert.

Then was I leke the strawe whan that the flame  
 Ys drevyn therin by force and rage off wynd;  
 I can nott tell, alas, what I shall blame,  
 Nor what to seke, nor what to fynd.

But wele I wote the greffe holdes me so sore  
 In hete and cold betwyxt hope and drede,  
 That but her helpe to helth doth me restore  
 Thys restles lyff I may not lede (pp. 202-03).

What is most interesting about this poem is that its use of Petrarch leaves it rather undistinguished. The images seem routinely imitative; in fact, the only lines of the poem that are truly moving are those free of Petrarchan conceits--the inflamed heart, the quaking heat, for example--and written instead in rather homely, conversational language:

So vnwarely was never no man cawght  
 With stedefast loke apon a goodly face,  
 As I of late . . . (p. 202),

or "I can nott tell, alas, what I shall blame,/ Nor what to seke, nor what to fynd" (p. 203). This poem, then, would appear to be one in which Wyatt's use of Petrarch has produced rather mixed results. The conceits provide the substance of the poem, yet the most convincing language is heard when Wyatt avoids Petrarchan imagery and relies primarily on his own plain style.

Not all such attempts to write in the more elaborate Petrarchan manner are unsuccessful, however, and, contrary to some critical opinion, Wyatt seems quite capable of composing an elegant sonnet of his own. When he chooses to do so, he can write an exceptionally smooth sonnet, as illustrated by CCXXIII:

Mye love toke skorne my servise to retaine  
 Wherein me thought she vsid crueltie:  
 Sins with good will I lose my libretye  
 To follow her wiche causith all my payne.  
 Might never care cause me for to refrayne  
 But onlye this wiche is extremytie,  
 Gyving me nought, alas, not to agree  
 That as I was, her man I might remayne.  
 But sins that thus ye list to ordre me  
 That wolde have bene your seruante true and faste,  
 Displese the not, my doting dayes bee paste,  
 And with my losse to leve I must agre;  
 For as there is a certeyne tyme to rage,  
 So ys there tyme suche madnes to asswage (p. 227).

An excellent use of the Petrarchan structure, if not an imitation of Petrarchan imagery, the sonnet reveals some important techniques of the master: the paradox--his beloved dismisses him after he has given up his liberty to be her servant--and the movement from the analytical description of the situation to direct address, with its sophisticated "acceptance" of the lady's wishes. This lady is no Laura, however. Petrarch's beloved holds him by the power of his love for her; Wyatt's "love" is clearly the femme fatale, the manipulator who would order him to be faithful even when his services are no longer

required.

But the sonnet form, although it provides Wyatt an opportunity to create the subtle bite of the final couplet, seems to constrain him. He can express the Petrarchan love dilemmas more fully in a variety of other poetic forms. For the lesson of Petrarch seems not to be the lesson of the conceit or of the sonnet structure itself, although Wyatt often makes use of both, but the lesson of Petrarch's power to reveal psychological and moral complexity, poetic power that consists mainly of the development of a tone that will express that complexity with as much precision as a speaking voice could reveal.

It is this lesson of Petrarch that leads Wyatt to dramatize in his own poetry the insights his translations and imitations revealed to him: knowledge of the confusion of time that accompanies a tortuous history of love, the importance of the lover's burdensome memory of past events and the effect of this memory on the present and the future, the difficulty of maintaining consistency of feeling in the face of disappointment and shame, and the role of fantasy and self-deception as the lover tries to protect himself from disillusionment and despair.

It is the role of fantasy that seems most to intrigue Wyatt in a very wide variety of poems, primarily



perhaps because Wyatt is always eager to make certain of cause and effect relationships. How can one assign blame or claim justification otherwise? And Wyatt's concern with justice demands that the proper relationships be known. One poem in which Wyatt explores these relationships and attempts to dramatize the lover's painful recognition of the deception into which fantasy can lead him is CXCII:

It was my choyse, yt was no chaunce,  
That brought my hart in others holde,  
Wherby ytt hath had sufferaunce  
Lenger perde then Reason wold;  
Syns I ytt bownd where ytt was ffree,  
Me thynkes, ywys, of Ryght yt shold  
    Acceptyd be.

Acceptyd be withowte Refuse  
Vnles that fortune hath the powere  
All Ryght of love for to abuse  
For, as they say, one happy howre  
May more prevayle then Ryght or myght.  
Yf fortune then lyst for to lowre,  
    What vaylyth Right?

What vaylyth Ryght yff thys be trew?  
Then trust to chaunce and go by gesse;  
Then who so lovyth may well go sew  
Vncerten hope for hys redresse.  
Yett some wolde say assueredly  
Thou mayst appele for thy relese  
    To fantasy.

To fantasy pertaynys to chose;  
All thys I knowe, for fantasy  
Ffurst vnto love dyd me Induse;  
But yet I knowe as stedefastly  
That yff love haue no faster knott  
So nyce a choyse slyppes sodenly--  
    Yt lastyth nott.

Itt lastyth not that stondes by change;  
 Fansy doth change, fortune ys frayle;  
 Both these to plese, the ways ys strange;  
 Therfore me thynkes best to prevayle,  
 Ther ys no way that ys so Just  
 As trowgh to lede, tho tother fayle,  
 And therto trust (pp. 201-02).

The speaker's argument seems reasonable enough: since he has loved, bringing himself more suffering than his "Reason" would have allowed, then the proper reward for his sacrifice would be the acceptance of his love. If Fortune should work against him and prevent his love from being accepted, then of what use is "Right"? The lover would then find himself in a world utterly without Justice, where the workings of Chance rule all. If Fortune denies him, and if there is no system of Right or Justice, then what is the lover to do? Some would say, the speaker tells us, that the forlorn lover should appeal to Fantasy. But at this point in the debate, the speaker can provide his own bitter response: it was fantasy that led him into love in the first place, and if love has no greater certainty than "fancy," which is subject to change, then this answer is of little use. He returns once again to the only acceptable alternative, trust in truth and "Ryght." Donald M. Friedman has observed that

Wyatt's poetic career points to his fairly early discovery that the glittering allure of power and beauty, and even the conviction of passionate love, were all deceptive creations of the fantasy. They

crumbled under the cold hand of political necessity or were eroded by the acid of human appetite. The external forces that destroy the possibilities of permanence and contentment are ungovernable by reason or by the most fervent personal assertion of faith. But more destructive than these is the faculty of the mind that imagines the objects of desire but cannot remain true to its own imaginings.<sup>1</sup>

The entire poem seems to debate the issue of whether self-determination is actually possible in the lover's world. "It was my choyce, yt was no chaunce," the speaker insists, and yet fantasy first led him into love, did him "Induse." The choice seems to have been made without full understanding. If, as Friedman suggests, one of the responsibilities of the fancy or imagination was to arrange and evaluate the sense impressions transmitted to it, even though the fancy was quite incapable of making moral distinctions that can be known only through the rational soul,<sup>2</sup> then the speaker's choice is one made without benefit of moral judgment. He has responded to love, but the love has been a product of his own mind. It did not exist outside the speaker as an identifiable "object." Rather, it has been created by the speaker's imagination. Thus, if love fails now to "behave" as it should, he has no recourse at all, for the love was never solid and real, but only a dream he created. So his trust

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<sup>1</sup>"Wyatt and the Ambiguities of Fancy," JEGP, 67 (January, 1968), 46.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

in "trowgh" is warranted only if this time the truth he envisions is the result of his power to reason and judge rather than of his ability to create an illusory lover's world.

This concern with responsibility is characteristic in Wyatt, and it would seem that Wyatt's poetic ability to give dramatic expression to such a concern is one of the results of his study of Petrarch and that poet's attempts to untangle the complex web of his love for Laura and the psychological and moral consequences of his surrender.

A similar attempt to separate illusion from reality can be found in CXCVII, where Wyatt's use of Petrarch's analytical method is accompanied by numerous Petrarchan echoes in the language:

Ffull well yt maye be sene  
To suche as vnderstand  
How some there be that wene  
They haue theyre welthe at hand  
Throughe loves abusyd band;  
But lytyll do they see  
Th'abuse wherin they be.

Of loue there ys a kynd  
Whyche kyndlythe by abuse,  
As in a feble mynd  
Whome fancy may enduce  
By loues dysceatfull vse  
To folowe the fond lust  
And profe of a vayne trust.

As I my self may saye  
By tryall of the same  
No wyght can well bewraye

The falshed loue can frame;  
 I saye twyxt grefe and game  
 Ther ys no lyvyng man  
 That knows the crafte loue can.

Ffor loue so well can fayne  
 To favour for the whyle  
 That suche as sekes the gayne  
 Ar servyd with the gyle;  
 And some can thys concyle  
 To gyue the symple leave  
 Them sellffes for to dysceave.

What thyng may more declare  
 Of loue the craftye kynd?  
 Then se the wyse, so ware,  
 In loue to be so blynd,  
 Yf so yt be assynd  
 Let them enjoye the gayn,  
 That thynkes yt worthe the payn (pp. 207-08).

This attempt to analyze love and lovers is similar in strategy to Wyatt's imitation of Petrarch in XXIV, "Som fowles there be that have so perfaict sight" (pp. 19-20). The lover who fails to recognize his danger is comparable to the "fowles" who try to play in the fire and "fynd the contrary of it that they intend" (p. 19). Wyatt's speaker, like Petrarch's, who tells us that he himself runs into the fire in spite of his "knowledge," offers his testimony "By tryall of the same."

How is it possible for "some" to "concyle" from themselves love's guile and thus "gyue the symple leave/ Them sellffes for to dysceave"? If they are enough aware of love's guile to choose to conceal it, then in what way are they deceiving themselves? Wyatt appears to be

dramatizing what has been called "strong" self-deception, a deception in which the

self-deceiver driven into the open suffers not only the pain of facing the truth head-on but also the shame merely of having deceived himself. And this moral assessment makes sense only if he was somehow aware at the time that the truth did not match what he nonetheless did, to his convenience, believe.<sup>1</sup>

The proof of love's craftiness, the speaker insists, is that we see the "wyse, so ware/ In loue to be so blynd," but, of course, they are not totally blind. They have granted themselves the "leave" to close their eyes to the truth. "Let them enjoye the gayn," the speaker demands, "That thynkes yt worthe the payn." The question is, what pain? The pain of disappointment after love has ended her favor "for the whyle"? Or the pain of recognition that comes when the lovers see "Th'abuse wherein they be"? For the lover has indeed been beguiled, if not by false love, crafty love, then by his own craft and deceit.

The degree of self-deception or of self-awareness in the lover frequently determines in Wyatt's poetry which of various responses to a love-situation the speaker is able to express. How confused the past events have become in his mind, to what extent his memory betrays his doubts or fears, how deeply immersed he is in the world his fancy has created--all these elements determine the way the

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<sup>1</sup>David Pugmire, "'Strong' Self-Deception," Inquiry, 12 (Autumn, 1969), 343.

speaker approaches or reveals his problems. And the problem in Wyatt's poetry is less varied than the poetic responses to it.

The Petrarchan love-situation that emerges in Wyatt's original poetry seems generally to be of only four kinds: the speaker complains of the endless waiting for his beloved's answer, he mourns the loss of his lover, or claims to have abandoned the pursuit himself, or he acknowledges the success of his lovesuit. Within these four major categories Wyatt's lovers assume a wide variety of responses, responses which frequently show considerable indebtedness to his apprenticeship through imitation of Petrarch.

In poems of the first type--the endless waiting--Wyatt, like Petrarch, is concerned with the illusions necessary to continue in a wearisome appeal when "reality" offers little hope of success. This dilemma is dramatized in a variety of poems of which LVIII is a fairly typical response:

To wisshe and want and not obtain,  
To seke and sew esse of my pain,  
Syns all that ever I do is vain,  
What may it availl me?

All tho I stryve boeth dey and howre,  
Against the streame with all my powre,  
If fortune list yet for to lowre,  
What may it availl me?

If willingly I suffre woo,  
If from the fyre me list not goo,  
If then I burne to plaine me so,  
What may it availl me?

And if the harme that I suffre  
 Be runne to farre owte of mesur,  
 To seke for helpe any further  
 What may it availl me?

What tho eche hert that hereth me plain  
 Pitieth and plaineth for my payn,  
 If I no les in greif remain  
 What may it availl me?

Ye tho the want of my relief  
 Displease the causer of my greif,  
 Syns I remain still in myschiefe,  
 What may it availl me?

Such cruell chaunce doeth so me threte,  
 Continuelly inward to frete,  
 Then of relese for to trete,  
 What may it availl me?

Fortune is deiff vnto my call,  
 My torment moveth her not at all,  
 And though she torne as doethe a ball  
 What may it availl me?

For in despere there is no rede;  
 To want of ere speche is no spede;  
 To linger still alyve as dede,  
 What may it availl me? (pp. 43-44).

The placing of "blame" leads to certain complexities. While the speaker seeks to blame Fortune, he has to admit that he "willingly" suffers woe, so it cannot be "cruell chaunce" alone that is responsible for his plight. Wyatt carefully weds form and content in his poem, allowing each stanza to reveal more clearly than the last one that the question "What may it availl me?" can have only one answer. The piling up of grief upon grief, woe upon woe in each succeeding stanza reinforces the futility of the question.



Like Petrarch, Wyatt makes use of the occasion of his endless waiting to examine the struggle within the mind of the lover as he considers his action and its consequences, primarily the consequence of danger to the mind itself. The speaker fears that the "harme" he suffers may "Be runne to farre owte of mesur" for help to come in time. Wyatt seems to have been particularly troubled by the fear that if the mind were forced to withstand pain, uncertainty, and unhappy remembrance too consistently, the mind could eventually lose its power to recover from such effects and would instead remain permanently scarred. It would be incapable of ever again making the appropriate rational judgments; indeed, it might be incapable of recognizing its own true identity. Friedman suggests that Wyatt is drawn to Senecan Stoicism "particularly by its suggestion of a core of identity within the mind, a focus of consciousness that maintains its self amidst life's vicissitudes."<sup>1</sup> According to Friedman, Wyatt sees the mind as a

harbour of uniqueness, the haven of that part of a man which remains unchanged by external events. This core of personality is terrifyingly fragile, as much of Wyatt's verse testifies; and the mind's powers to observe and imagine, to evaluate, interpret, and judge are all that can preserve it against the dangers of the unstable world it contemplates.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"The 'Thing' in Wyatt's Mind," p. 376.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 377.

But in the love poetry at least the mind's strength is less obvious than its vulnerability, a vulnerability so profound that the speaker frequently searches for any "answer" that will help him camouflage the part he has played in causing his distress. We see this defense at work in CCXXVII, where the usual futility of waiting is expressed. But here the lover places the blame for his grief upon the lady rather than upon fortune or his own foolishness:

I abide and abide and better abide,  
 And after the olde prouerbe the happie daye;  
 And ever my ladye to me dothe saye  
 'Let me alone and I will prouyde'.  
 I abide and abide and tarrye the tyde  
 And with abiding spede well ye maye;  
 Thus do I abide I wott allwaye,  
 Nother obtayning nor yet denied.  
 Aye me! this long abidyng  
 Semithe to me as who sayethe  
 A prolonging of a dieng dethe  
 Or a refusing of a desyrid thing:  
 Moche ware it bettre for to be playne,  
 Then to saye abide and yet shall not obtayne (p. 231).

The lover recognizes that he dwells in a loveless-limbo so painful that a refusal would be more welcome than his continued pain in waiting for the "yes" he has begun to suspect will never come. Yet he continues to "abide." The lady is characterized as a coquette whose power is more easily criticized and resented than the power of Fortune or of Love. And certainly her error is less painful for the lover to accept than his own. Unlike the Petrarchan poems in which the lady is guilty merely

of not returning the speaker's love, here the speaker is highly critical of her behavior, suggesting that her delay in responding is not the result of her failure to love him, but the evidence of her careful and cruel strategy. Although Wyatt is more subtle here than in some of his other poems, where vindictiveness is expressed outright, the speaker is clearly angry and resentful.

"I abide and abide" shows delicacy and precision of tone we so often find in Petrarch. The repetition in the first line creates the slow tedium of the lover's waiting, "I abide and abide and better abide," leading finally to the speaker's exclamation "Aye me!" and his sober reflection upon the disastrous effect of his "long abidyng." Rather than tell us of his sighs and moans, the lover utters his long, miserable "sigh" of a poem and thus successfully dramatizes a state of mind, heart, and soul that no mere collection of Petrarchan conceits could express so vividly.

When Wyatt does rely on the conceit to carry the full burden of his poetic efforts, he frequently expands a single conceit, as Patricia Thomson has suggested Wyatt does in his imitations,<sup>1</sup> and carries it to its logical, or even literal, conclusion. In LXXII, for example, Wyatt develops in five stanzas the conceit he creates in

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<sup>1</sup>"The First English Petrarchans," p. 96.

the first:

Syns ye delite to knowe  
That my torment and woo  
Should still encrease  
Withoute relese,  
I shall enforce me so  
That liff and all shall goo,  
For to content your cruelnes (p. 54).

The remaining stanzas pursue the paradox that he will die and that this will at last satisfy his beloved, offering still another alternative, then, to the lover who waits too long. Only the change of the refrain in the final stanza provides relief from the tedium created by the lengthy expansion of the conceit. A poem developed in a similar fashion, and offering the same response, "Comfort thy self my wofull hert" (LXXIV), has the advantage, however, of being musically appealing, and here too the refrain of the earlier stanzas is altered, "Why sighes thou then, and woulst not breke?" becoming in the last stanza:

Then in her sight, to move her hert,  
Seke on thy self thy self to wreke,  
That she may knowe thou sufferdst smert:  
Sigh there thy last, and therewith breke! (p. 57).

Occasionally, Wyatt is able to combine both the Petrarchan conceit and his own plain analysis in creating poetry that seems not to be "repeating" Petrarchan language or imagery for its own sake, but to be using it to build poetic tension between the language of the conceit itself and the speaker's response to it. "Alas the greiff" (V)

is a perfect example of this technique. The first three stanzas provide a catalog of "teres" and "sighes" that have failed to move the lady:

Alas the greiff, and dedly wofull smert,  
The carefull chaunce, shapen afore my shert,  
The sorrowfull teres, the sighes hote as fyer,  
That cruell love hath long soked from myn hert,  
And for reward of ouer greate desire  
Disdaynfull dowblenes have I for my hiere!

O lost seruise! O payn ill rewarded!  
O pitiful hert with payn enlarged!  
O faithfull mynd, too sodenly assented!  
Retourne, Alas, sethens thou art not regarded;  
Too great a prouf of true faith presented  
Causeth by right suche faith to be repented.

O cruel causer of vnderserued chaunge  
By great desire vnconstantly to raunge  
Is this your waye for prouf of stedfastnes?  
Perdy you knowe--the thing was not so straunge--  
By former prouff to mucche my faithfulness:  
What nedeth, then, suche coloured dowblenes? (pp. 3-4).

He has been faithful; she has not. Shall he still abide and abide? Shall he punish her with his own death? No, there is another "alternative":

I have wailed thus weping in nyghtly payne  
In sobbes, and sighes, Alas! and all in vayne,  
In inward plaint and hertes wofull torment;  
And yet, Alas, lo! crueltie and disdayn  
Have set at noght a faithfull true intent  
And price hath priuilege trouth to prevent.

But though I sterue and to my deth still morne,  
And pece mele in peces though I be torne,  
And though I dye, yelding my weried goost,  
Shall never thing again make me retorne:  
I qwite th'entreprise of that that I have lost  
To whome so euer lust for to proffer moost (p. 4).

The ending comes as a bold surprise. One would expect a different sort of logic. "I have wailed thus" to no avail,

but "though I sterue" I shall--and here the usual Petrarchan logic demands--continue to love. The actual ending, rather than the expected one, is a remarkable turnabout. He has lost his love, after this long waiting, and now even if it kills him to cease to love her, he will force himself to "qwrite th'entreprise." It may be that Herbert Howarth is right in claiming that "price" is a coded symbol for Henry VIII, who had the power to take Anne Boleyn from Wyatt.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the specific experience that prompted Wyatt to write the poem, its use of Petrarch is highly imaginative and original. The lover expresses his record of pain through a series of Petrarchan images and then admits that these cries, all of them appropriate to the faithful servant of Love, have been "all in vayne." His "true intent" has been overlooked and the truth of his love prevented from being understood--whether by command, slander against him, we cannot know. It may be that his elegant, stylized complaint has indeed been misunderstood, accepted only as a courtly compliment rather than as the quite literal expression of love the speaker intended it to be. The poem examines the language of the lover, then, as much as it does his situation, and one wonders if he is torn "pece mele in peces" because he must now give up the one he loves or because he sees that the elaborate ritual of love he has observed, a ritual once

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<sup>1</sup>"Wyatt, Spenser and the Canzone," p. 81.

meaningful to him, is now a sham. The disillusionment expressed by the end of the poem is clear; what is not so clear is the exact cause of disillusionment.

Another variation of response to "underserved change" is found in CCXI:

To Rayle or geste ye kno I vse it not  
 Though that such cause some tyme in folkes I finde:  
 And tho to chaung ye list to sett your minde,  
 Love yt who liste, in faithe I like yt not.  
 And if ye ware to me as ye are not,  
 I wolde be lothe to se you so unkinde;  
 But sins your faithe muste nedes be so be kinde,  
 Tho I hate yt, I praye you leve yt not.  
 Thinges of grete waight I neuer thought to crave:  
 This is but small--of right denye yt not.  
 Your fayning wayis as yet forget them not,  
 But like rewarde let other lovers have:  
 That is to saye, for seruic true and faste,  
 To long delaies and changing at the laste (p. 217).

Here the sonnet form has provided Wyatt an appropriate means to write a highly ironic and "cool" response. The first line establishes the tone--the calm, restrained voice of a man who has thought his situation through. There will be no exclamations, just his carefully prepared speech. His complaint is a controlled one, and because of the two-part sonnet form, we are prepared for a more impassioned plea in the sestet, a further attempt perhaps to make the lady abandon her coy ways. But here Wyatt has offered a surprise. With the bite of "This is but small--of right denye yt not," he asks his final favor: treat other lovers as you have treated me. The sonnet form, in this case, has precisely

the compression that such a controlled statement requires. In the longer love lyrics the form allows the lover to present a rambling plea for love or a lengthy complaint against delay. Wyatt seems to have discovered in his imitations of Petrarch the way in which the sonnet could serve him best.

Still another form allows Wyatt the successful dramatization of a different response. In No. L the brevity of the poem becomes its own "statement":

What wourde is that that chaungeth not,  
 Though it be tourned and made in twain?  
 It is myn aunswer, god it wot,  
 And eke the causer of my payn.  
 A love rewardeth with disdain,  
 Yet is it loved. What would ye more?  
 It is my helth eke and my sore (p. 36).

The speaker is finally at a loss for words to express either his grief or his love. There is no point in repeating his sighs and groans here; they are all too familiar. "What would ye more?" says all that needs to be said. And the line "It is my helth eke and my sore" expresses in stark simplicity the Petrarchan paradox Wyatt treats in other poems by other methods. It is probably of only minor significance to the modern reader that Anne Boleyn may have provided the immediate inspiration for the poem. What is more important is that Wyatt created a wide variety of poems in response to what appears to be the same dilemma. This variety suggests that the poet



sees a single, or even a similar, love situation as far too complex to be revealed poetically by a single form or a single attitude. His own emotional and intellectual fluctuations, perhaps, demand such variation.

Wyatt's response to the actual loss of love, rather than to the painful waiting for love's reward, is capable of similar variation. The least complicated stance is assumed by the rejected lover of CLXXXVI:

And wylt thou leve me thus?  
Say nay, say nay, ffor shame,  
To save the from the Blame  
Of all my greffe and grame;  
And wylt thou leve me thus?  
Say nay, Say nay!

And wylt thou leve me thus,  
That hathe lovyd the so long,  
In welthe and woo Among?  
And ys thy hart so strong  
As for to leve me thus?  
Say nay, Say nay!

And wylt thou leve me thus,  
That hathe gevyn the my hart,  
Neuer for to Depart,  
Nother for payn nor smart;  
And wylt thou leve me thus?  
Say nay, Say nay!

And wylt thou leve me thus  
And have nomore Pyttie  
Of hym that lovythe the?  
Helas thy cruellite!  
And wylt thou leve me thus?  
Say nay, Say nay! (pp. 196-97)

The plea is a typical one--why should his beloved leave him when he has been loving, faithful, patient, in short, the perfect Petrarchan lover. Only a shameless ingrate could

reject him now, after his suffering has become the proof of his love. It is surely composed to be set to music, and we would suppose that the musical effect would make it almost impossible for the lady to really abandon him.

At the opposite pole of response, however, is

CCXXIV, a very free use of Serafino:

Tanglid I was yn loves snare,  
Opprest with payne, tormente with care,  
Of grefe right sure, of Joye full bare,  
Clene in dispaire bye crueltye;  
But ha, ha, ha, full well is me,  
For I am now at libretye.

The wofull dayes so full of paine,  
The werye night all spent in vayne,  
The labor lost for so small gayne,  
To wryt them all yt will not bee;  
But ha, ha, ha, full well is me,  
For I am now at libretye.

Everye thing that faire doth sho,  
When prof is made yt provithe not soo,  
But tournith mirth to bittre woo,  
Wiche in this case full well I see;  
But ha, ha, ha, full well is me,  
For I am now at libretye.

To grete desire was my guide,  
And wanton will went bye my syde;  
Hope rulid still and made me byde  
Of loves craft th'extremitye.  
But ha, ha, ha, full well is me,  
For I am now at libretye.

With faynid wordes wich ware but winde  
To long delayes I was assind;  
Her wylke lokes my wyttes ded blinde;  
Thus as she wolde I ded agree.  
But ha, ha, ha, full well is me,  
For I am now at libretye.

Was never birde tanglid yn lyme,  
 That brake awaye yn bettre tyme,  
 Then I that rotten bowes ded clyme,  
 And had no hurte, but scaped fre.  
 Now ha, ha, ha, full well is me,  
 For I am now at libretye (pp. 227-28).

The refrain becomes increasingly hollow, though, as the poem traces the lover's long struggle in the grip of love. And the laugh is decidedly forced, for while the speaker claims to have "had no hurte, but scaped fre," the entire poem re-creates his "hurte": "Opprest with payne, tormente with care," "wofull dayes," "bittre woo." He even admits that to "wryt" his woes "yt will not bee."

How far from escaping free the lover actually is can be seen in LXII:

My hope, Alas, hath me abused,  
 And vain rejoyssing hath me fed;  
 Lust and Joye have me refused  
 And carefull plaint is in their stede;  
 To muche avauncing slaked my spede;  
 Myrth hath caused my hevines,  
 And I remain all comfortles.

Whereto did I assure my thought  
 Without pleasure stedfastly?  
 In fortunes forge my Joye was wrought,  
 And is revolted redely.  
 I ame mystaken wonderly,  
 For I thought nought but faithfulness,  
 Yet I remain all comfortles.

In gladsom chere I did delite,  
 Till that delite did cause my smert  
 And all was wrong where I thought right;  
 For right it was that my true hert  
 Should not from trouth be set apart,  
 Syns trouth did cause my hardines;  
 Yet I remain all comfortles.

Sometye delight did tune my song,  
 And led my hert full pleasauntly;  
 And to my self I saide among:  
 My happe is commyng hastely.  
 But it hath happed contrary;  
 Assuraunce causeth my distres,  
 And I remain all comfortles.

Then if my note now do vary  
 And leve his wonted pleasauntnes,  
 The hevy burden that I cary  
 Hath alterd all my Joyefulnes.  
 No pleasure hath still stedfastnes,  
 But hast hath hurt my happenes,  
 And I remain all comfortles (pp. 45-46).

The speaker has his "libretye" here as well, yet he remains "all comfortles." Wyatt's lover, like the lover of the Rime, has discovered that his burden of disappointment has made true joyfulness impossible. The paradox of the poem, however, arises from the fact that it is not his disappointment that has "abused" him, but hope. It is almost as if Wyatt has expanded the final lines of Petrarch's "Mie Venture" (lvii), translated by Wyatt as "Ever myn happe is slack and slo in commyng" (XXX):

And if that I have after suche bitternes  
 Any thing swete, my mouth is owte of tast,  
 That all my trust and travaill is but wast (p. 23).

The speaker who can recall the time he believed his "happe" was "commyng hastely" is as much distressed as the Petrarchan lover who finds his "happe" slack and slow to come. In both poems the lover's trust in love and his lady has proved foolish, and the sad disparity between what the speaker anticipated and what actually followed has left him somewhat

dazed. Far from being able to celebrate his freedom from love's snare, the lover in Wyatt must admit that if all was wrong when he thought it right, then things can easily go wrong again. The lover is badly shaken by his experiences. In a subtle way, the speaker of "My hope, Alas, hath me abused" is no more distressed than the speaker who proclaims his joyful liberty when the most important revelation of his song is the memory of his pain--pain he can never laugh away, no matter how boisterous the refrain.

Whether the variations upon the lover's state of mind after his love has ended seem boldly different or subtly alike, each poem in this category of situation reveals a speaker who has been affected in a way he is not quite able to cope with. The damage left in the wake of his love experience is dramatically expressed for us in LIX:

Some tyme I fled the fyre that me brent  
 By see, by land, by water and by wynd;  
 And now I folow the coles that be quent  
 From Dovor to Calais against my mynde.  
 Lo! how desire is boeth sprong and spent!  
 And he may se that whilome was so blynde;  
 And all his labor now he laugh to scorne.  
 Mashed in the breers that erst was all to torne (p. 44).

It would seem that once again Wyatt's relationship with Anne Boleyn has provided the stimulus for a complex and delicate poem, written probably when Wyatt was sent to Calais in Anne's retinue before her marriage to King Henry.<sup>1</sup> While

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<sup>1</sup>Muir and Thomson, Commentary, p. 311.

the most obvious irony of the poem is in the speaker's being forced to pursue--or at least to accompany--his love after his passion has subsided, the more subtle and moving irony lies in the lover's continued misery after his love has ended. Desire is spent, and the speaker can see now what he could not recognize before: that she was unworthy of his love? that he never had a chance to win her? that his own fantasy betrayed him? The exact recognition is left obscure; we know only that he is scornful now of his former pursuit of her. But his bitter scorn is not laughable, and his present state is no better than his former one, for he is "Mashed in the breers that erst was all to torne."

How frequently Wyatt's speaker claims to see where he was once blind, and yet neither state is free from pain. For Wyatt, the loss of love brings no release from bondage, but instead creates a new kind of captivity, the remembrance of former feeling and its accompanying pain, or the sad knowledge that one's efforts were misguided from the beginning. The lover seems to have no genuine pleasure; he is pained while he awaits the granting of love, pained if his love is eventually refused, and even pained, as other poems reveal, when his love is returned.

Occasionally, however, Wyatt outwardly expresses confidence in the lover's ability to forget his love, as

in CCXXV:

Lengre to muse  
On this refuse  
I will not vse,  
But studye to forget;  
Letting all goo,  
Sins well I kno  
To be my foo  
Her herte is fermelye sett.

Sins my entent  
So trulye mente  
Cannot contente  
Her minde as I doo see,  
To tell you playne  
Yt ware yn vayne  
For so small gaine  
To lese my libretie.

For if he thryve  
That will goo stryve  
A shippe to dryve  
Againste the streame and winde,  
Vndoutedlye  
Then thryve shuld I  
To love trulye  
A cruell-hertid mynde.

But sithe that so  
The world dothe goo  
That everye woo  
Bye yelding doth increesse,  
As I have tolde  
I wilbe bolde  
Therebye my paynis to cese.

Prayeng you all  
That after shall  
Bye fortune fall  
Ynto this folishe trade,  
Have yn your minde,  
As I do finde,  
That oft be kinde  
All womens love do fade.

Wherefore apace,  
 Come, take my place,  
 Some man that hase  
 A lust to berne the fete;  
 For sins that she  
 Refusith me,  
 I must agre  
 And studye to forgett (pp. 228-29).

But while the speaker promises "to muse" no longer on his disappointment in love, the most revealing characteristic of the poem is its length, its rambling, repetitive nature: six stanzas are required for the speaker to begin to forget. The lover seems to be confiding to a male listener and will tell him "playne" how he has come to recognize, and now act upon, the futility of his pursuit. But the repetition of this acceptance of "knowledge" serves only to reveal all the more clearly his reluctance to accept it and his monumental effort to convince himself. "Sins well I kno," "Vndoutedlye," "As I have tolde," "As I do finde"--all these expressions are used primarily to remind himself of the wisdom he has acquired.

The poem becomes a debate. Following a strategy Wyatt often uses, the speaker asserts his position in the first stanza, but then the weakness of that position becomes increasingly clear as the poem develops. This progression as the speaker's feelings or doubts reveal themselves more and more dramatically throughout the poem, or are actually altered as the speaker contemplates what he has just said,



would seem to be one of the results of Wyatt's close examination of Petrarch's method, for in the imitations we are able to trace Wyatt's "revisions" of Petrarch, revisions that are possible primarily because Wyatt has recognized an opportunity for the speaker to realize the significance of what he has just said--and thus to expand upon that significance--or to realize that he has already admitted far too much and must now back away from his own revelation.

Another poetic response to what appears to be a similar situation of hopelessness in love is developed in LXXI:

In eternum I was ons determed  
 For to have loud and my mynde affermed,  
 That with my herte it should be confermed  
     In eternum.

Forthwith I founde the thing that I myght like,  
 And sought with loue to warme her hert alike,  
 For as me thought I shuld not se the like  
     In eternum.

To trase this daunse I put my self in prese;  
 Vayne hope ded lede and bad I should not cese  
 To serue, to suffer, and still to hold my pease  
     In eternum.

With this furst Rule I fordred me a pase  
 That as me thought my trougthe had taken place  
 With full assurans to stond in her grace  
     In eternum.

It was not long er I by prooffe had found  
 That feble bilding is on feble grounde,  
 For in her herte this worde did never sounde  
     In eternum.

In eternum then from my herte I keste  
 That I had furst determind for the best;  
 Now in the place another thought doeth rest  
 In eternum (pp. 53-54).

This time, rather than ask some other foolish man to take his place and be "burned," the speaker casts out his former feeling and allows another "thought" to take the place of his trust in love. He has naively believed in love and faithfulness; his own truth was to be his protection. But the reality that "feble bilding is on feble ground" has led him to reject his love. She, after all, did not know the meaning of "truth." Yet the poem seems to be a face-saving gesture; he has cast her from his heart after it was finally clear to him that she had never truly given him her own heart, at least not to him alone. The new thought now resting in the place of his former devotion remains obscure, a characteristic device in Wyatt, apparent also in "They fle from me" (XXXVII), perhaps Wyatt's best known variation on the loss of love, where the enigmatic quality of the final line is similar to the speaker's refusal to elaborate on the nature of the "thought" that now rests with him "In eternum." And, of course, this last "In eternum" is highly ironic, for the speaker's new thought will hardly remain the same any longer than the earlier one did. This means that each "In eternum" is suspect, for as things

turned out, he was not determined to love her forever (Stanza 1), he will in all probability see the like again (Stanza 2), he did not suffer and hold his peace endlessly (Stanza 3), and he was not in her grace forever (Stanza 4), because she never did accept the notion of loving "In eternum" (Stanza 5). The poem is extremely ironic--even cynical--allowing us to see the complaining speaker, who is both naive and vain, in as unflattering a light as we see his former love.

"They fle from me" is so rich a poem that critics have discovered in it numerous possibilities for different interpretation and even what they believe to be important insights into Wyatt's personality. J. D. Hainsworth suggests, for example, that in this poem Wyatt is able to do more than find relief for his feelings. He achieves a "readjustment to his circumstances" when he can "take over and enter fully into the dramatic role of lover" and thus his "struggle to get beyond his own troubles and to dramatize them in this way, seems part of the impulse behind the writing of the poem, and an important part of its meaning."<sup>1</sup>

This device of poetically thinking through a number of attitudes and responses to personal experience

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<sup>1</sup>"Sir Thomas Wyatt's Use of the Love Convention," Essays in Criticism, VII (January, 1957), 95.

may indeed have been an emotional safety valve for Wyatt, something like the variety of argumentative stances one conjures up in the silence of a sleepless night, responses that are perhaps an elaborate defense, an artful apology, or even a brilliant insult. "They fle from me" does have a special quality of thoughtfulness that arises in part from the speaker's own awareness of the wonder of his recollection, of the incredible discrepancy between what he remembers and what he understands of his present condition:

They fle from me that sometyme did me seke  
 With naked fote stalking in my chambre.  
 I have sene theim gentill tame and meke  
 That nowe are wyld and do not remembre  
 That sometyme they put theimself in daunger  
 To take bred at my hand; and nowe they raunge  
 Besely seking with a continuell change.

Thancked be fortune, it hath ben othrewise  
 Twenty tymes better; but ons in speciall  
 In thyn arraye after a pleasaunt gyse  
 When her lose gowne from her shoulders did fall,  
 And she me caught in her armes long and small;  
 Therewithall swetely did my kysse,  
 And softly said 'dere hert, how like you this?'

It was no dreame: I lay brode waking.  
 But all is torned thorough my gentilnes  
 Into a straunge fasshion of forsaking;  
 And I have leve to goo of her goodness,  
 And she also to vse new fangilnes.  
 But syns that I so kyndely ame serued,  
 I would fain knowe what she hath deserued (p. 27).

Several critics have noted the difference in imagery throughout the poem. E. E. Duncan-Jones comments

on the fact that much "of the beauty of Wyatt's poem surely comes from the contrast between the veiled terms used in the first verse and the sharpness with which the lady is seen and heard in the second."<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Muir, too, remarks on "the particularity of the second stanza which carries immediate conviction. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Another critic notes, however, that the basic poetic device is not found "in the imagery, but in the grammar, in the careful patterning of past and present."<sup>3</sup>

All of these students of Wyatt are noting important characteristics, of course, but they do not go far enough in attempting to explain why such "differences" should exist in the poem at all. What is especially important is the way in which Wyatt reveals the past, for, strangely enough, it becomes far more real than the present. We see the past through the most concrete language of the poem, while the present is somehow unreal, "abstract" rather than particular and vivid.

Even in the first stanza there is greater detail in describing what was once true than there is in describing

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<sup>1</sup>"Wyatt's 'They Flee from Me,'" Explicator, XII (November, 1953), Item 9.

<sup>2</sup>Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1963), p. 245.

<sup>3</sup>Albert S. Gerard, "Wyatt's 'They fle from me,'" Essays in Criticism, XI, No. 3 (July, 1961), 360.

the present baffling circumstances: the gentle lovers "with naked fote" who took "bred" at his hand are now only seen as "wyld" and "besely seking" change. In the second stanza the speaker recalls it has been "Twenty tymes better." And the scene of the "speciall" time is unusually vivid and specific.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the scene is so remarkably wonderful in its detail that the speaker has to insist, "It was no dreame: I lay brode waking." Not only could the listener mistake it for an erotic dream; the speaker himself is amazed by the scene he recalls. This suggests that we should look more closely at the speaker's remembrance.

He recalls how "tame" and "meke" his lovers were, how self-sacrificing, even ready to risk discovery to be with him. And "ons in speciall" his lover desired him so much that she made the advances, flattering him with seductive gestures and words. It all sounds too good to be true. Indeed, is it true? Or has the speaker very carefully sifted through his memories, putting aside for the time being those that would cloud or even change this happy picture? His special love, for example, is

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the possible Ovidian influence on this poem, see C. E. Nelson, "A Note on Wyatt and Ovid," Modern Language Review, LVIII (January, 1963), 60-63.

hardly "meke," and a more perceptive lover might now wonder if her boldness with him was not in fact a clear indication that she was already "wyld," already seeking diversion. He remembers what he wants to remember: to do otherwise would be to destroy the only comfort left him.

"Ons in your grace" (CLVI) appears to be a response to an almost identical situation:

Ons in your grace I knowe I was,  
 Evyn as well as now ys he;  
 Tho ffortune so hath tornyd my case,  
 That I am doune, and he ffull hye,  
 Yet ons I was.

Ons I was he that dyd you please  
 So well that nothyng dyd I dobte;  
 And tho that nowe ye thinke yt ease  
 To take him in and throw me out,  
 Yet ons I was.

Ons I was he in tyms past  
 That as your owne ye did Retayne;  
 And tho ye haue me nowe out cast,  
 Shoyng vntruthe in you to Raygne,  
 Yet ons I was.

Ons I was he that knygt the knot,  
 The whyche ye swore not to vnknyt;  
 And tho ye fayne yt now fforgot,  
 In vsynge yowr newffanglyd wyt,  
 Yet ons I was.

Ons I was he to whome ye sayd:  
 'Welcomm, my joy, my hole delight!'  
 And tho ye ar nowe well apayd  
 Of me, your owne, to clame ye quyt,  
 Yet ons I was.

Ons I was he to whome ye spake:  
 'Haue here my hart, yt ys thy owne!'  
 And tho thes wordis ye now fforsake,  
 Sayng therof my part ys none,  
 Yet ons I was.

Ons I was he before Reherst,  
 And nowe am he that nedes must dye;  
 And tho I dye, yet at the lest,  
 In your Remembrance let yt lye  
 That ons I was (pp. 167-68).

The words the lover recalls are not simply presented "in evidence" so that the unfaithful mistress will be forced to recognize the promises she pretends she has forgotten. He repeats the words primarily because they are all he has left. Without them, how can he "know" he was once in her grace? Like the lover of "They fle from me," he could see so well the pleasure he brought his mistress that he doubted nothing. He wants her to remember what he remembers, for if her memory is the mirror image of his own, then the reflection will somehow be "true"; nothing can then change or distort it, neither the present reversal nor future change.

The ability to control the thoughts of our past life is, of course, of primary importance in our attempts to deceive ourselves. As Pugmire explains:

The fact that I cannot be aware of or believe something without being to some extent mindful of it does not mean that I must attend to every aspect of what I believe equally, or indeed at all. I am quite capable of admitting to myself that something is the case while remaining (perhaps even studiously) oblivious to many of its features.<sup>1</sup>

What is important about "this capacity to render a belief

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<sup>1</sup>"'Strong' Self-Deception," p. 344.



abstract by keeping in abeyance many details of what makes it true, is that attention to these is what annuls any contrary belief."<sup>1</sup> In "Ons in your grace" the lady is probably as "studiously" oblivious of her former vows of love, which the speaker insists she only pretends to have forgotten, as the speaker is careful to recall only those expressions of deep love that will console him now.

For Wyatt, even success in love seldom brings any real satisfaction, however, often because the struggle to obtain love has taken such a heavy toll on the lover that little bliss can follow. The rejected lover clings to the sweeter memories of his past affairs; the successful one seems finally to be unprotected from assault by the image of his earlier disasters. Wyatt attempts to analyze the reason for this in LII:

Marvaill no more, all tho  
The songes I syng do mone,  
For othre liff then wo  
I never proved none;  
And in my hert also  
Is graven with lettres diepe  
A thousand sighes and mo,  
A flod of teres to wepe.

How may a man in smart  
Fynde matter to rejoyse,  
How may a morning hert  
Set fourth a pleasaunt voise?  
Play who that can that part,  
Nedes must in me appere  
How fortune overthwart  
Doeth cause my morning chere.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

Perdy, there is no man,  
 If he never sawe sight,  
 That perfaictly tell can  
 The nature of the light;  
 Alas, how should I then  
 That never tasted but sowre  
 But do as I began  
 Continuelly to lowre?

But yet perchaunce som chaunce  
 May chaunce to chaunge my tune,  
 And when suche chaunce doeth chaunce,  
 Then shall I thanck fortune;  
 And if I have souche chaunce,  
 Perchaunce ere it be long,  
 For such a pleasaunt chaunce  
 To syng som plaisaunt song (pp. 38-39).

Wyatt, like Petrarch, has found his distress more real than his apparent good fortune, for the past remains in his memory too powerful a force for him to ignore it for very long. It is curious that for Wyatt the lover can guard against painful recognition at precisely the moment when recognition would prevent him from placing himself in a position to be hurt once again. But just when the lover needs to be able to take advantage of a more promising situation, ironically, at this instant, the miserably inconvenient recollection of disappointment will plague him.

There is something almost perverse about a lover who would mar his present happiness by a nagging insistence that this time it had better be the real thing, yet this is the worry of the lover of LXV:

Ons as me thought fortune me kyst  
 And bad me aske what I thought best,  
 And I should have it as me list  
 Therewith to set my hert in rest.

I asked nought but my dere hert  
 To have for evermore myn owne;  
 Then at an ende were all my smert,  
 Then should I nede no more to mone.

Yet for all that a stormy blast  
 Had overturned this goodely day;  
 And fortune semed at the last  
 That to her promes she saide nay.

But like as oon oute of dispere  
 To soudden hope revived I;  
 Now fortune sheweth herself so fayer  
 That I content me wonderly.

My moost desire my hand may reche,  
 My will is alwaye at my hand;  
 Me nede not long for to beseche  
 Her that hath power me to commaund.

What erthely thing more can I crave?  
 What would I wisshe more at my will?  
 No thing on erth more would I have,  
 Save that I have to have it still.

For fortune hath kept her promes  
 In graunting me my moost desire:  
 Of my sufferance I have redres,  
 And I content me with my hiere (pp. 47-48).

Once again, the past, present, and future fuse into one. He has succeeded finally in winning his love, but wishes now "to have it still." His contentment is therefore qualified by his difficulty in accepting his good fortune as permanent. There remains the uncomfortable suspicion that fortune may cease to show "herself so fayer" and will once more overturn his gain. Wyatt's lover would like a

world in which every effort would be guaranteed success, but his experience teaches him there are no guarantees. Faithfulness does not necessarily bring reward; love is not automatically, or by "right," returned. The lover admits that no matter how often he pleads for a sign or pledge that all will be well, the most frequent outcome will be disappointment; yet the wonder of it all is that he continues to fall in love, continues to risk whatever dire result he envisions.

For even the lover's apparent "success" in love can be unwelcome, as we see in XXXVIII:

There was never nothing more me payned,  
Nor nothing more me moved,  
As when my swete hert her complayned  
That ever she me loved.

Alas the while!

With pituous loke she saide and sighed  
'Alas what aileth me  
To love and set my welth so light  
On hym that loveth not me?

Alas the while!

'Was I not well voyde of all pain,  
When that nothing me greved?  
And now with sorrous I must complain  
And cannot be releved.

Alas the while!

'My restfull nyghtes and Joyfull daies  
Syns I began to love  
Be take from me; all thing decayes  
Yet can I not remove.

Alas the while!'

She wept and wrong her handes withall,  
The teres fell in my nekke.  
She torned her face and let it fall;  
Scarsely therewith could speke.

Alas the while!

Her paynes tormented me so sore  
 That comfort had I none,  
 But cursed my fortune more and more  
 To se her sobbe and grone.

Alas the while! (p. 28)

His "swete hert" is now in the predicament of the Petrarchan lover of most of Wyatt's poems, and, for once, we see this distress from the point of view of the one who causes it. Unlike the cruel woman who disdains the love of her suitor, the beloved here is tormented because he is the cause of her misery. It might at first seem that the poem is a kind of wish fulfillment: at last, the one who is loved shows genuine pity for the sadness of the miserable lover. But the last verse contains the suggestion that the beloved is once again concerned with his own fortune: "But cursed my fortune more and more/ To se her sobbe and grone." The entire poem, in fact, is devoted to an expression of the speaker's own sorrow. For "never nothing more me payned," he tells us, and his own "Alas the while!" is an ingenious echo of her complaint, as if her "Alas the while!" is of little consequence except as it affects his own peace of mind. And there is as well the unpleasant suggestion that the speaker is even proud of his power to cause pain. He can congratulate himself for having at last placed himself in the enviable position of the "unloving" beloved.

Like the imitations written during Wyatt's Petrarchan apprenticeship, these original variations on

a theme give him the chance to explore emotional and intellectual complexities in or out of love. The variations encourage as well the development of more precise words and gestures to express feeling or thought. Like an actor who broadens his range by playing a variety of parts, Wyatt can illuminate the meaning of a single stance by seeing it as if in a house of mirrors, each mirror showing one aspect more clearly than another, yet each a distortion by being only a partial view. Only when we can look in all the mirrors are we able to see love as Wyatt eventually sees it, as poem after poem--sometimes sonnet, sometimes song--examines love-situations that are few in number perhaps but rich in possibility for poetic response.

Petrarch's ambitious attempt to express the many moods and thoughts of his struggle with love and life seems to have given Wyatt precisely the "model" he needed to create his own world of lovers betrayed and tortured, exploited again and again by shallow women or by cruel Chance. In Wyatt's world, even when the lover may not be brave enough to face the most painful "truth" he suspects, he is nevertheless too honest to ignore it for long, and thus he encounters one crisis after another, not simply in the conflict between his beloved and himself, but within the facets of his own mind. And it is Wyatt's

desire to dramatize that struggle of the lover's mind that leads him to emulate Petrarch, and perhaps to try to surpass him, in his own poetic experiment.

## CHAPTER IV

### ELOQUENCE IN BARENESS: WYATT'S PLAIN STYLE

While Wyatt's original poetry reveals very clearly the influence of Petrarch, both the original verse and even the translations and imitations most consistently strike their own special note in being unrelentingly plain. The simplicity in diction, the conversational, even homely statements, the frequent repetition of "plain" lines of verse, thus increasing the appearance of a plain style--all these characteristics set Wyatt's poetry apart from Petrarch's. In such poems as "So vnwarely was never no man cawght" (CXCIII) where Wyatt makes use of numerous Petrarchan conceits--the inflamed heart, the pale face, the burning desire--such images serve to emphasize even more strongly the difference between the lines containing them and the ones in which Wyatt speaks more plainly, and far more convincingly.

But if Wyatt finds it necessary in most of his poetry to simplify, or even abandon altogether, Petrarchan imagery, he does see the value of using the most important techniques he has learned from the master: examination of the paradox of love, analysis of the lover's response to



his situation, use of direct address, and personal example that could establish the speaker's authority. Most of all, Wyatt values Petrarch's power to reveal psychological and moral complexity by the creation of poetic tone that can express that complexity with all the precision of a speaking voice. And this "voice" can reveal, of course, not only the firmness of the lover who "knows the score," but the trepidation of the lover who wishes to know either more or less than he does.

In order to express such a complex tone, Wyatt relies most frequently on several poetic or rhetorical strategies that appear to serve him best. For example, he may use repetition--either exact or varied in some significant way--to bring us from the speaker's initial question, or accusation, or moral resolve to a position that reflects the futility of that question, accusation, or resolve. Such poetic movement usually involves another poetic device, irony. And almost as frequently as he uses the ironic method, Wyatt relies upon subtle, cryptic, even obscure language to suggest what the speaker cannot bring himself to say outright, or to create an intimacy between the speaker and audience by insisting that what is only hinted at is surely known by both.

Wyatt's use of repetition helps to create in CXCV such an effect of movement in the speaker's shifting and

troubled thoughts:

I se the change ffrom that that was  
 And how thy ffayth hath tayne his fflyt  
 But I with pacyense let yt pase  
 And with my pene thys do I wryt  
 To show the playn by prowff off syght,  
 I se the change.

I se the change off weryd mynd  
 And sleper hold hath quet my hyer;  
 Lo! how by prowff in the I ffynd  
 A bowrynyng ffath in changyng ffyer.  
 Ffarwell my part, prowff ys no lyer!  
 I se the change.

I se the change off chance in loue;  
 Delyt no lenger may abyde;  
 What shold I sek ffurther to proue?  
 No, no, my trust, ffor I haue tryd  
 The ffolloyng of a ffallse gyd:  
 I se the change.

I se the change, as in thys case,  
 Has mayd me ffre ffrom myn avoo,  
 Ffor now another has my plase,  
 And or I wist, I wot ner how,  
 Yt hapnet thys as ye here now:  
 I se the change.

I se the change, seche ys my chance  
 To sarue in dowe and hope in vayn;  
 But sens my surty so doth glanse,  
 Repentens now shall quyt the payn,  
 Neuer to trust the lyke agayn:  
 I se the change (pp. 204-05).

Wyatt uses one of his favorite techniques here, the repetition of the first line of each stanza in the refrain, thus creating an even more forceful repetition than the customary refrain could allow. Such a refrain is called the Love-Burden by Puttenham because it is often repeated

and bears the whole burden of the song.<sup>1</sup> Yet this repetition is not heavy-handed when we consider its meaning in the poem. The speaker's revelation of his knowledge--"I se the change"--is as startling to him as he intends it to be to the listener. He has been blind, a state so frequently described in Wyatt's poems, but now he can see, and the light of this discovery is almost blinding in itself. Even when Wyatt's refrain seems at first to be "exact" repetition, as in this lyric, there is a subtle shift in meaning. For the first four stanzas, "I se the change" refers to the speaker's perception that things outside himself have changed--the nature of love, the faithfulness of the beloved. But in Stanza 5, realizing more fully the significance of all these other changes, the speaker can now follow a new course, "Neuer to trust the lyke agayn." The change he sees now is the change in himself. The further irony, of course, is that while he claims to follow his new resolution, since it is the logical action of one who recognizes the truth of his past mistakes, it is far more likely that this resolution will go the way of almost all such resolutions. There will probably be no change.

While in a variety of other poems Wyatt makes slight but telling alterations in the refrain, it is clear that in

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<sup>1</sup>George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1936), p. 225.

CXCV, he is able to create differences in meaning even while the refrain is uttered in the same language. We have already examined in Chapter III other poems that use the refrain in much the same way: "There was never nothing more me payned" (XXXVIII) with its "Alas the while!" refrain; "But ha, ha, ha, full well is me,/ For I am now at libretye," the refrain of CCXXIV; and the "In eternum" refrain of LXXI. Consequently, Wyatt's "plain" style is somewhat deceptive. Language forms that seem simple and straightforward may in fact carry deeper meaning than the "surface" suggests.

In "Alas, fortune, what alith the" (CXII), Wyatt does alter the refrain, as he addresses Fortune directly, not merely reflecting upon his own misfortune, but pressing home his attack in an accusing and argumentative manner:

Alas, fortune, what alith the  
 Thus euermore to turment me?  
 Although that I onworthy be  
 Thow wylt not chaunge.

Faynest when I wold obteyne,  
 Then thow hast me still in disdayne,  
 Wylt thow thus styll increase my payne,  
 And wylt not chaunge?

Alas! doth this not the suffice?  
 What prouf yet canste thow more devyse  
 Then styll to turment me in this wise  
 And yet not chaunge?

What should I more to thee now saye?  
 Sum hoppe in me doth rest alwaye,  
 Yet bound to thee I doo obey;  
 When wylt thou chaunge?

Seyng there ys noo remedy,  
 I wyll the suffer paciently,  
 Euer in trust at last, perdy,  
 That thow wylt chaunge (pp. 128-29).

The varying form of the refrain helps to reinforce the logical progression in the poem, from the forthright "Thow wylt not chaunge" of the first stanza, to the pitiable questions of Stanzas 2, 3, and 4, leading finally in the last stanza to the stoical acceptance through faith--no matter how difficult--"That thow wylt chaunge." The use of direct address helps emphasize both the touching vulnerability of the speaker and his basic honesty as the plainspeaking victim who confronts his enemy and speaks his mind.

Wyatt uses similar rhetorical techniques in LVII. The figures of repetition serve well to call attention to the logical construction of the poem:

Tho I cannot your crueltie constrain,  
 For my good will to favour me again;  
 Tho my true and faithfull love,  
 Have no power your hert to move,  
 Yet rew vpon my pain.

Tho I your thrall must evermore remain,  
 And for your sake my libertie restrain,  
 The greatest grace that I do crave  
 Is that ye would vouchesave  
 To rew vpon my pain.

Tho I have not deserued to obtain  
 So high Reward but thus to serue in vain,  
 Tho I shall have no redresse  
 Yet of right ye can no lesse  
 But rew vpon my pain.

But I se well that your high disdain  
 Wull no wise graunt that I shall more attain;  
 Yet ye must graunt at the lest  
 This my poure and small request:  
 Reioyse not at my pain (pp. 42-43).

Anaphora, a figure of repetition beginning a series of clauses with the same word<sup>1</sup>--"Tho I" and "Yet" and "But"--is used to move forward to the lover's "poure and small request." Each clause sets up a contrast that will reveal the speaker's virtues as opposed to his beloved's faults. Thus "your crueltie" opposes "my good will," and "my true and faithfull love" cannot move "your"--obviously cold--"hert." The speaker must remain the lady's "thrall," and for her sake his "libertie restrain." He admits he "shall have no redresse," yet "of right" the lady should pity his suffering. But since the lady's "high disdain" will never allow her to feel compassion for him, at the very least, she could refrain from rejoicing at the pain she has caused him.

Throughout the poem the directness of the speaker's plea--both in the actual form of address and in the apparent candidness of the statements--helps to reveal his vulnerability, a vulnerability so great that he is reduced to his final "poure" request. His own desires and motives are not

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<sup>1</sup>Sister Miriam Joseph, C.S.C., Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language (New York and London: Hafner Publishing Company, 1947), p. 79.

cleverly disguised, as we suppose the lady's to be, since the speaker remains her "thrall" while she keeps him dangling with the hope that someday she will finally offer "grace" or "Reward." Instead, the speaker intends to bare his "true and faithfull love."

In both poems--one addressed to Fortune and one to a disdainful lady--the strategy of direct address lends support to the impression the speaker tries to create of a man who is open, honest, and therefore unafraid to confront those who oppose him or to plead his case before the one who could offer reward. And the frequent repetition, of "thow," "the," "ye," serves as a constant reminder to the reader that he is now a privileged "witness" to the continuing relationship between the speaker and the one so addressed.

Wyatt uses an even more complex scheme of repetition in "Suche happe as I ame happed in" (XXXVI), allowing the first line of each stanza to repeat the last line of the previous one:

Suche happe as I ame happed in  
 Had never man of trueth I wene;  
 At me fortune list to begyn  
 To shew that never hath ben sene  
 A new kynde of vnhappenes;  
 Nor I cannot the thing I mene  
 My self expres.

My self expresse my dedely pain  
 That can I well, if that myght serue;  
 But why I have not helpe again  
 That knowe I not vnles I starve;

For honger still a myddes my foode  
 So graunted is that I deserue  
 To do me good.

To do me good what may prevaill?  
 For I deserve and not desire,  
 And stil of cold I me bewaill  
 And raked ame in burnyng fyere;  
 For tho I have, suche is my lott,  
 In hand to helpe that I require,  
 It helpeth not.

It helpeth not, but to encrease  
 That that by prouff can be no more:  
 That is the hete that cannot cesse,  
 And that I have to crave so sore,  
 What wonder is this greedy lust  
 To aske and have, and yet therefore  
 Refrain I must.

Refrain I must; what is the cause?  
 Sure, as they say, so hawkes be taught.  
 But in my case laieth no suche clause,  
 For with suche craft I ame not caught;  
 Wherefore I say and good cause why,  
 With haples hand no man hath raught  
 Suche happe as I (pp. 26-27).

Here, as elsewhere, Wyatt seems to value figures of repetition for their power to reveal logical relationships and to dramatize argumentative progression. The interlocking stanzas suggest the figure sorites, a chain of reasoning, including perhaps a series of enthymemes or abridged syllogisms. Such a series would ordinarily demand the repetition of the last word of each statement at the beginning of the next, a figure rhetoricians called climax or gradation, since it marked the various stages in the argument.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 180.



Wyatt also makes good use in the poem of local figures of repetition, such as polyptoton, the repetition of words that are derived from the same root, but have different endings or forms,<sup>1</sup> as in line one, "happe" and "happed," and in the last two lines, "haples" and "happe." The repetition emphasizes the peculiarity of the circumstances: "Suche happe as I ame happed in/ Had never man of trueth I wene" reveals an almost comical amazement as the speaker becomes aware of his plight, an amazement that is reflected also at the end of the stanza, "Nor I cannot the thing I mene/ My self expres." The further repetition as the second stanza begins with the same words serves to emphasize the speaker's need to pull himself together, to say what he does mean. The additional repetition as each stanza is linked to the next creates the effect of the lover's pondering his dilemma, having some difficulty moving from one thought to the next because each revelation is more puzzling than the last. Thus the contradictory or paradoxical nature of love, as illustrated by such Petrarchan conceits as cold in the midst of burning fire, or hunger amidst food, is reinforced by the "plain" language and its emphasis on the speaker's inability to understand his plight or to do anything to help himself.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 306.

We find in "Suche hadde as I am happed in" one of the rhetorical devices of disputation, paroemia, a saying of popular origin, usually known as an adage or proverb,<sup>1</sup> in "Sure, as they say, so hawkes be taught" (line 30). What is interesting about Wyatt's use of the adage here is that the speaker can find no help from it. In spite of what "they say," he cannot see himself in the same position as the hawk, "for with suche craft I am not caught." But, while the poetic speaker cannot apply the adage to himself, the reader can easily imagine the speaker to be a victim of "craft," and the reader can then see more "logic" in the haplessness of the lover than he can see for himself. Petrarch, too, uses the adages other men live by somewhat ironically (as in Rime cv), for if such common sayings are different from what personal experience tells him, then he regards personal experience as right and the adage as clearly wrong.

Similar to "Suche hadde" in its reliance upon the truth of personal experience is LXXVII. Instead of merely repeating Petrarchan clichés, the speaker here first questions their logic:

To cause accord or to agree,  
 Two contraries in oon degre,  
 And in oon poynet as semeth me  
 To all mens wit it cannot be:  
 It is impossible.

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1Ibid., p. 310.

Of hete and cold when I complain  
 And say that hete doeth cause my pain,  
 When cold doeth shake me every vain,  
 And boeth at ons, I say again  
     It is impossible.

That man that hath his hert away  
 If lyff lyveth there as men do say  
 That he hertles should last on day  
 Alyve and not to torne to clay,  
     It is impossible.

Twixt lyff and deth, say what who sayth,  
 There lyveth no lyff that draweth breth;  
 They joyne so nere and eke i'feith  
 To seke for liff by wissh of deth,  
     It is impossible.

Yet love that all thing doeth subdue  
 Whose power ther may no liff eschew  
 Hath wrought in me that I may rew  
 These miracles to be so true  
     That are impossible (p. 58).

Not only formal logic, but simple common sense, tells the speaker that "two contraries" are impossible. But in spite of "all mens wit," the speaker must examine his own experience, and if he feels "hete" and "cold" "boeth at ons," then how can other men's logic be acceptable? His experience of "love that all thing doeth subdue" has taught him the reality of the "impossible." Wyatt's "proof" here is an example of one of the topics of invention, martyria, which confirms a statement by personal experience.<sup>1</sup> But the poem is not persuasive simply because of the speaker's personal

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

experience and the "authority" that now makes him; it is persuasive and appealing also because of its firmness, a firmness that is bound to accompany such plainspoken statements.

Yet acceptance of the "miracle" of love is difficult for Wyatt, who more frequently expects love to measure up to an honorable code between honest, candid, decent people. In "Pas fourthe, my wountyd cries" (CLIX), the speaker's heartfelt cries and his tears are called upon to induce pity in his mistress--even though her hard nature has resisted him so far:

Pas fourthe, my wountyd cries,  
Thos cruel eares to pearce,  
Whyche in most hatful wyse  
Dothe styll my playntes reuers.  
Doo you, my tears, also  
So weet hir bareyn hart,  
That pite ther may gro  
And cruelty depart.

For thoughe hard roks amonge  
She semis to haue beyn bred,  
And wythe tygers ful Longe  
Ben norysshed and fed;  
Yet shall that natuer change,  
Yff pyte wons wyn place,  
Whome as ounknown and strange  
She nowe away dothe chase.

And as the water soufte,  
Wytheout forsinge of strength,  
Wher that it fallythe oft,  
Hard stonnes dothe perce at Lengthe,  
So in hyr stony hart  
My playntes at Lengthe shall grave,  
And, rygor set apart,  
Cawse hir graunt that I craue (pp. 171-72).

But in Stanza 4, the "miracle" of pity that his cries and tears are asked to work is revealed to be his due, the "frut" he deserves, according to proper standards of human relationships, rather than a "blessing" both miraculously unexpected and undeserved:

Wherfor, my pleyntes, present  
 Styl so to hyr my sut,  
 As it, through hir assent,  
 May brynge to me some frut;  
 And as she shall me proue,  
 So byd hir me regard,  
 And render Loue for Loue:  
 Wyche is my iust reward (p. 172).

The simplicity of the final lines provides marked contrast to the earlier Petrarchan extravagance of tears falling upon the lady's heart, cries piercing her ears, and the like. If indeed Love should be returned for Love, then the elaborate compliment of the poem is of little real value, for no amount of playful chiding could actually convince the lady to follow strict rules of conduct in love when her moral insensitivity has already allowed her to ignore them.

Thus Wyatt's use of the plain style in presenting his Petrarchan subject-matter has the effect of seriously altering that subject-matter, removing from it the impression of love idealized and analyzed almost to the point of blissful acceptance--no matter how cruel love's pangs--and of presenting instead a love that is obliged to adhere to acceptable standards of conduct, or else it cannot be

termed "love." It is the combination of plain, even homely language and of Petrarchan conceits that creates Wyatt's unique poetry. Once Wyatt subjects both courtly conventions and courtly language to the scrutiny of a plain-dealer, the need for "plain" language calls for the unadorned, rather than the ornate style.

And as Robert Lovejoy notes, while poets of the ornate style rely upon elaborate description, the plain style poets rely primarily upon explanation. Poems in the plain style can be found among the anonymous religious and love lyrics of both the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with the carol the dominant poetic form for the plain style in the fifteenth century. The plain style is often used for didactic poems, depending for its effects upon rhythmical regularity, an emphatic tone, and directness of speech. In Lovejoy's view, the poetry of Wyatt clearly belongs to the tradition of the Middle English lyric since his "demand for justice in all human relationships and his refusal to feign acceptable feelings for the sake of fashion or convenience were themes which the plain style poets of the carol and other Middle English lyrics returned to again and again."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Barton Lovejoy, "Wyatt and the Tradition of the Middle English Lyric," Dissertation Abstracts, XXIX (1969), 4460A.

The plain style affords Wyatt a perfect union of form and content. The beloved plays the courtly game, and Wyatt's poetic speaker is a partner in that game, but only so long as the proper rules are followed and just rewards are realized. If he detects foul play, the speaker quickly scolds--even chastizes--his love for her essential duplicity. And only the speaker who "says what he means and means what he says" can be assured of moral superiority. So we find the plain-dealing lover using language that is more frequently strengthened by logical argument than embellished by description.

Wyatt's skill in using the refrain to express the logical, argumentative progression of thought within a song is revealed very effectively in "My lute, awake!" (LXVI). The conclusion of the argument is established in Stanza One:

My lute, awake! perfourme the last  
Labour that thou and I shall wast  
And end that I have now begon;  
For when this song is sung and past,  
My lute be still, for I have done (p. 48).

The next two stanzas explain why the speaker considers his labor to have been wasted:

As to be herd where ere is none,  
As lede to grave in marbill stone,  
My song may perse her hert as sone;  
Should we then sigh, or syng, or mone?  
No, no, my lute, for I have done.

The Rokkes do not so cruelly  
 Repulse the waves continually  
 As she my suyte and affection,  
 So that I ame past remedy,  
 Whereby my lute and I have done (p. 49).

Logically, one might suppose that the song should end here, since whatever else the speaker has to say will surely be wasted too, but he introduces an argumentative twist at this point, showing in the next four stanzas what will happen after his song is done:

Prowd of the spoyll that thou hast gott  
 Of simple hertes thorough loves shot,  
 By whome, vnkynd, thou hast theim wone,  
 Thinck not he haith his bow forgot,  
 All tho my lute and I have done.

Vengeaunce shall fall on thy disdain  
 That makest but game on earnest pain;  
 Thinck not alone vnder the sonne  
 Vnquyt to cause thy lovers plain,  
 All tho my lute and I have done.

Perchaunce the lye wethered and old,  
 The wynter nyghtes that are so cold,  
 Playning in vain vnto the mone;  
 Thy wisshes then dare not be told;  
 Care then who lyst, for I have done.

And then may chaunce the to repent  
 The tyme that thou hast lost and spent,  
 To cause thy lovers sigh and swoune;  
 Then shalt thou knowe beaultie but lent  
 And wisshe and want as I have done (p. 49).

In Stanza 8, the speaker can finally end his song, for he has not, after all, wasted further pleas for her love; he has sung in order to call down "vengeaunce" on her "disdain/ That makest but game on earnest pain":



Now cesse, my lute; this is the last  
 Labour that thou and I shall wast,  
 And ended is that we begon;  
 Now is this song boeth sung and past;  
 My lute, be still, for I have done (p. 50).

The song is characteristically Wyatt's. Here, as in many other poems, the distressed speaker says in effect, I've said all I'm going to say, but then he goes on, and on, and on--even when the futility of his plea was apparent from the start. His reluctance to "be done" with this disdainful lady is made increasingly clear as the song continues.

This difficulty not only in having the last word, but of coming to the last word is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in No. CCXV, a highly dramatic poem that uses a variety of argumentative strategies. The first stanza places the reader in a personal situation full of dramatic possibilities. The speaker appears to be confronted by his unfaithful wife or mistress who seeks forgiveness and reconciliation:

What shulde I saye  
 Sins faithe is dede  
 And truthe awaye  
 From you ys fled?  
 Shulde I be led  
 With doblenesse?  
 Naye, naye, mistresse! (p. 220).

The tone here is very clear. The speaker's attitude is that he should not be required to say anything at all. The error has been hers. He need offer no explanation

for his leaving, nor should he accept her standard of "doblenesse," not because such duplicity would mean that he would necessarily deceive her by being unfaithful, as she has been, but because such "doblenesse" would corrupt his own integrity. He cannot be false to his standard of values by pretending to be reconciled to the fact that she has betrayed him. The speaker ends the stanza by answering his own question with the forceful line, "Naye, naye, mistresse!" No matter what she asks, the answer is no, for she has no right to ask.

The woman's presence, however, makes it impossible for him to end the interview here. She deserves no explanation, but she gets one anyway: she has broken the promises made to him in her marriage (or love) vows. This is reason enough to part:

I promisd you  
 And you promisd me  
 To be as true  
 As I wolde bee,  
 But sins I se  
 Your doble herte  
 Farewell, my perte (p. 221).

So far in the poem the speaker has maintained his superior position. There is no argument she can offer to challenge him. But the poem does not end here, for once again the woman's presence--and apparently her desirability--exert too powerful a dramatic force. The speaker falters, and

his position suddenly changes:

Though for to take  
Yt ys not my minde  
But to forsake  
One so unkind  
And as I finde  
So will I trust.  
Farewell, uniuste! (p. 221).

The juxtaposition of ideas in the first three lines of the third stanza shows the speaker's confusion, his uncertainty. What had started out in Stanza One as a direct and forceful expression of his intention to leave has become an agonizing debate, and he is shaken by this sudden turn. The refrain reveals an important shift in the speaker's position. In the second stanza he is firm, even rude, in his farewell. But in this stanza he resorts to the word "uniuste," a word that places his position of superiority in great jeopardy. Only the person with power can be just or unjust. And she is unjust not only in the sense that her past conduct was less admirable than he deserved, but also because at this particular moment she is unfairly or "unjustly" using her feminine wiles to entice him.

In the fourth and last stanza, he resolves his dilemma the only way he can:

Can ye saye naye?  
But you saide  
That I allwaye  
Shulde be obeide;  
And thus betraide  
Or that I wiste,  
Fare well, unkiste! (p. 221).

Because of his increasing difficulty in resisting the temptations of his former love, the speaker resorts almost in desperation to several figures of argument, combining two of them--procatalepsis, where the speaker "confutes the objection which his opponent is likely to make, even before he has uttered it . . . ,"<sup>1</sup> and metastasis, "the turning back of an objection against him who made it"<sup>2</sup>--"But you saide. . . ." In the first stanza the speaker is the one to say "Naye, naye," but this time he is forced to ask the woman if she can deny that she has broken her vows and that his is the superior moral position, "Can ye saye naye?" He is using here the figure synchoresis, whereby "trusting strongly in his own cause," he "freely gives his questioner leave to judge him. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Desperate to end the argument, the speaker uses the figure commoratio by coming back to his strongest point<sup>4</sup>--the marriage or love vows and the fact that the woman cannot deny that she has broken her part of the bargain. This sudden crowding in of familiar, readily accepted "logical" and "persuasive" figures of argument

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<sup>1</sup>Sr. Miriam Joseph, Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 383.

only emphasizes all the more clearly how useless such logic really is in the love-situation before us. The speaker has regained his composure, or so he thinks. But the final refrain reduces the entire stanza to comic irony: "Fare well, unkiste!"

The very simplicity of language gives the effect of ordinary conversation, and this somehow makes the poem especially unsettling and moving: we are peeking through the keyhole at a scene too private to be shared. Yet the scene has been displayed for us by the self-confident speaker who, trusting in his moral virtue and in his skill at disputation, has revealed more of his inner doubt and troubled mind than he had ever intended. Clearly, the "plain" language of the poetic speaker is not always as "simple" as it seems.

How such plain language does in fact achieve its remarkable poetic effect has concerned other critics of plain style poets. In his evaluation of Ben Jonson's use of the plain style, Trimpi argues that poetry

in the plain style offers the reader the intimacy of a specific situation and its context of feeling. The generalizations, either stated or implied, arise out of particular detailed experience and are persuasive because the reader is encouraged to participate in the experience rather than simply to acquiesce in a moral precept. The emotional attitude is established and conveyed by an inductive process. . . .<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Wesley Trimpi, Ben Jonson's Poems: A Study of the Plain Style (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 236.

This intimacy created between poet and reader is strengthened, according to Trimpi,

by the urbanity of tone that has traditionally given the plain style its vitality. It is the urbanity which claims the experience as the writer's own but which, at the same time, recognizes that it is relatable to the experiences of others and that the relationship might be valuable.<sup>1</sup>

What is especially interesting here is that for Wyatt a "particular" and "detailed" experience is less often presented the reader than is experience of a very general nature. How are we to account for the consistent use of generalization, even cloudy vagueness in Wyatt? One answer, of course, lies in the atmosphere of the Court. Secrecy was obviously not simply to be desired; it was in some cases necessary as very real protection against discovery and punishment. In Petrarch, too, the desire to protect Laura results in a lovely variety of coded references, to the laurel, for example. Herbert Howarth remarks that Petrarch found so many ways to refer to Laura indirectly

that he gave his age and his successors a new urbanity, which included an elaborate art of circumlocution. Wyatt may have recognized his craft and intensified his own circumlocutions--but, as ever, in his own way: cultivating not urbanity but bareness.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 236-37.

<sup>2</sup>"Wyatt, Spenser and the Canzone," p. 83.

But the answer would seem to be far more complex than this. In both Petrarch and Wyatt, the real concern, after all, is not the specific situation, but the speaker's response to it. Petrarch may seem to be more carefully detailed than Wyatt, since he frequently describes physical details of lady or landscape, as Wyatt does not, but the basic concern of the poem in Petrarch as well as in Wyatt is the individual response rather than the exact nature of the love-situation. Patricia Thomson refers to No. CXCIIII ("So vnwarely was never no man cawght") as being not a catalog of beauties, but a description of the effect of beauty, and she argues that the

result of this plain technique is obvious. Weight is thrown not on to what Wyatt sees but on to what he feels about what he sees. The whole of this poem remains entirely self-centred.<sup>1</sup>

For Petrarch, too, however, it is the "result" that is of primary importance. This introspection has a bolder, more startling effect in Wyatt, though, because the poems are so bare, so sparse in detail. In Petrarch, the images of sighs, tears, heart, or eyes attract our attention and give us the first impression, at least, that we are being told the detail we crave. But in Wyatt, after an initial, usually hazy, reference to a situation--

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<sup>1</sup>Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Background, p. 132.

a beloved who is currently disdainful, a broken promise, a slanderous attack by enemies--we are plunged into a mental debate we could not have anticipated. Wyatt pulls us into his lover's world, his lover's mind, and we struggle for answers, much as the lover struggles himself. Throughout the love poems, Wyatt creates an intimacy between the speaker and his reader or listener not simply by confiding in him the details of his situation, as other poets might do, but by assuming that speaker and audience share the knowledge hidden from others.

Poems in which there are many particular lines as opposed to general ones are so rare in Wyatt that they are memorable for being quite special. In the translations or imitations, it is true, there is more specific detail, but these are the details of Petrarchan conceits--fair eyes, salt tears, burning sighs, hard heart, swift arrows. But in the original poetry such detail is seldom to be found. In "They fle from me" (XXXVII) we find a very specific scene of autobiographical recollection, but the present circumstance the speaker refers to is as cloudy as the scene of the past is clear. And the ending, "But syns that I so kyndely ame serued,/ I would fain knowe what she hath deserued" (p. 27), relies for its effect upon the intimate knowledge and sympathy of the reader who automatically or "by right" will share the speaker's point



of view. In "There was never nothing more me payned" (No. XXXVIII) and in "Ons in your grace" (No. CLVI) we find the detail of the woman's actual speech, or, at least, the words her lover recalls, but these are exceptional poems indeed. In "Some tyme I fled the fyre" (No. LIX) there are specific images similar to those in Petrarch, as the "fyre" or "coles," and, in this case, the actual place names of Dover and Calais, but once again the exact circumstances are puzzlingly vague.

Typical of Wyatt's cryptic method is No. XV:

Ffor to love her for her lokes lovely  
 My hert was set in thought right fermely,  
 Trusting by trought to have had redresse;  
 But she hath made an othre promes  
 And hath geven me leve full honestly  
 Yet do I not reioyse it greatly,  
 For on my faith I loved to surely;  
 But reason will that I do sesse  
 For to love her.

Syns that in love the paynes ben dedly,  
 Me thinck it best that reddely  
 I do retorne to my first adresse;  
 For at this tyme to great is the prese,  
 And perilles appere to abundauntely  
 For to love her (p. 14).

How can one break the code of the poem? What "othre promes"? What "reason"? What "first adresse"? What "perilles"? The modern reader can only speculate that the poem might be a reference to Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII. Perhaps for Wyatt's contemporaries, the code would be more

easily understood, but the fact remains that the poem requires the listener--whether he is privy to current gossip or not--to fill in his own blanks, and thus to participate in the "making" of the poem. Condensation, subtlety, innuendo, even obscurity become the most frequent means in Wyatt to reveal truths sometimes only half-realized or self-awareness too painful to be stated more fully. Thus the language, like the memory of the past that is so often part of Wyatt's poetic analysis, becomes a narrow passage through which more fully realized truths cannot be channeled. The effect of this "repression" can be dramatically explosive.

In the case of poems using direct address, the lady, although not ordinarily revealed by name, surely knows who she is, and, as one critic has noted, if Wyatt let his poems "circulate among his friends at Court, as was the custom, they must have made some lady's cheek burn under its paint with indignation quite as strong as his own."<sup>1</sup> And this refusal to name the lady is consistent with the speaker's position of moral superiority. He need not stoop to name the lady or to offer "proof," for the lady's own knowledge of her ill treatment of him is sufficient to give him satisfaction, such

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<sup>1</sup>Lu Emily Pearson, Elizabethan Love Conventions (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1933), p. 64.

as it is. Wyatt allows his poetic speaker to explain this position in CCXIX:

Spight hath no powre to make me sadde,  
Nor scornefulnesse to make me playne  
Yt doth suffise that ons I had,  
And so to leve yt is no payne.

Let theim frowne on that leste doth gaine  
Who ded reioise must nedes be gladd  
And tho with wordis thou wenist to rayne,  
Yt doth suffise that ons I had.

Sins that in chekes thus overthwarte  
And coylis lookis thou doste delight,  
Yt doth suffise that myne thou wart;  
Tho change hathe put thye faith to flight.

Alas it is a pevishe spight  
To yelde thi silf and then to parte;  
But sins thou settst thie faith so light,  
Yt doth suffise that myne thou warte.

And sins thy love dothe thus declyne  
And in thye herte suche hate dothe grow  
Yt dothe suffise that thou warte myne  
And with good will I quite yt soo.

Some tyme my frinde, fare well my foe  
Sins thou change I am not thyne,  
But for relef of all my woo  
Yt doth suffise that thou warte myne.

Prayeng you all that heris this song  
To iudge no wight, nor none to blame;  
Yt dothe suffise she dothe me wrong,  
And that herself doth kno the same.

And tho she change, it is no shame;  
Their kinde it is, and hath bene long;  
Yet I proteste she hathe no name:  
Yt dothe suffise she dothe me wrong (pp. 223-24).

There is no need to accuse her before the world, for the only world that counts is their world--hers and the lover's. And when she fails to be true to that world, she is on the

outside looking in, while the speaker and the listener become sympathetic partners. The view of woman's changeableness is not peculiar to Wyatt; in Petrarch, too, (No. clxxxiii) woman is seen as by nature changeable, and Petrarch tells us in the sonnet that he knows very well that in a woman's heart love lasts only a short time. In Wyatt's poem--and, of course, in Petrarch's as well--the male expresses great confidence in his superiority. A woman may be a shallow creature, but a man is constant, generous, in fact the perfect lover. The impression Wyatt's speaker tries to create of having been treated shamefully, but of now rising nobly above his defeat is further aided by repetition.

For the poem reveals an elaborate pattern of repetition, with the stanzas linked in pairs, the third line of the first of the pair becoming the last line of the second. Throughout the poem, then, an uneasy balance--both rhetorical and psychological--is created between the spite, scorn, hatred the speaker recognizes in the woman and his own steadfastness as he clings to the notion (revealed and emphasized in the repetition) that this setback is of no great consequence because "Yt doth suffice" that she once loved him and that she knows she "dothe" him wrong.

But here, as in other of Wyatt's poems, the speaker goes too far, and in protesting too much he allows us to see that he is revealing something other than what he had intended. Thus, instead of convincing the reader that the pain he feels does not matter, the repetition serves mainly to suggest that the speaker is trying very hard to convince himself. He is pained indeed and must find "relief." Playing the part of the incredibly tolerant, and superior, male seems to be as good a way as any.

The intimacy created between the speaker and his audience is the result of several poetic strategies. The listener is at first simply the eavesdropper, a witness to the speaker's farewell to his former love, but in Stanza 7, Wyatt accomplishes a marvelous feat of irony. The speaker turns from the lady--in a kind of Shakespearean aside--and tells the audience to "iudge no wight, nor none to blame." How generous! How kind! How totally insincere! The entire song puts the blame clearly on the lady, but now, in a final splendid gesture, he tells us, don't blame her, "Their kinde it is. . . ." The woman's "pevishe spight" seems small indeed when we compare it to the pointing finger of the speaker. Yet the poetic speaker sees his strategy as brilliant, for not only will the male who

hears the song condemn the lady and praise the magnanimous loser; even another woman would condemn this weak creature for bringing shame on her sex. In short, the speaker hopes to win everyone to his side. Much of the enjoyment of the poem comes from our being able to discover and appreciate the speaker's strategy and at the same time to see behind that strategy the ironic gaze of the poet.

Wyatt's desire to perfect an ironic technique that would allow his plain style to reveal more than one level of meaning is revealed in a pair of poems, suggested to Wyatt perhaps when he composed a very free imitation of two of Serafino's strambotti<sup>1</sup> in the poem "Thou slepest ffast" (CLXVII):

Thou slepest ffast; and I with wofull hart  
 Stand here alone, syghing, and cannot ffleye.  
 Thou slepyst ffast, when crewell love his darte  
 On me dothe cast, Alas! so paynefullye.  
 Thou slepyst fast, and I all ffull of smart  
 To the my fo in vayn do call and crye.  
 And yet, methinkes, thou that slepyst ffast,  
 Thou dremyst styll whiche way my lyf to wast (p. 179).

In both XLII and LIV Wyatt apparently wishes to create an ironic effect as the lady is punished for her cruel thoughts. The poems are an extension of "Thou slepest ffast," where the lady emerges the winner, free from harm in spite of her cruelty. But in this pair of poems, the

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<sup>1</sup>The sources are available for comparison in the Muir and Thomson Commentary, pp. 412-13.

pained lover is able to have some satisfaction.

In LIV the speaker seems unaware of his own vindictiveness:

She sat and sowde that hath done me the wrong  
 Wherof I plain, and have done many a daye;  
 And whilst she herd my plaint in pitious song  
 Wisshed my hert the samplar as it lay.  
 The blynd maister whome I haue serued so long,  
 Grudging to here that he did here her saye,  
 Made her owne wepon do her fynger blede,  
 To fele if pricking were so good in dede (p. 40).

The speaker has found a convenient servant, Love, to punish the lady, and there is no need for him to recognize his own "grudging." But the poem provides no real clues to force us to see the greater possible irony, that the poet-listener-reader can be aware of the speaker's own spitefulness even though the speaker is not. We have only the knowledge that it is the speaker's fantasy, not the lady's, that the samplar is his own heart. But in XLII, Wyatt clearly wants us to read the poem in such a way as to see the greater irony:

Who hath herd of suche crueltye before?  
 That when my plaint remembred her my woo  
 That caused it, she cruell more and more  
 Wisshed eche stitche, as she did sit and soo,  
 Had prykt myn hert, for to encrease my sore;  
 And, as I thinck, she thought it had ben so:  
 For as she thought this is his hert in dede,  
 She pricked herd and made her self to blede (p. 32).

Here, Wyatt has provided the details that tip the scale--

"And, as I thinck, she thought it had ben so." The opening

question, so plain and direct on the surface, becomes highly ironic when we see that the answer--intended to show the lady's cruelty--reveals the speaker's own vindictiveness.

It is impossible to know whether the poems were intended merely as companion pieces or whether one represents an earlier version, altered by Wyatt as he sought some improvement. If one could suppose that Wyatt revised for the sake of greater irony, then No. XLII would be the "perfected" version.

But even though we cannot be certain how nearly "perfect" are many of the poems we have examined, how accurately in fact they represent Wyatt's final alterations, we can say with certainty that many rhetorical strategies appear again and again in his poetry. Among his favorite poetic techniques is that of direct address, used at times to express the speaker's "true" and "faithful" love to his mistress in language that frequently combines conventional Petrarchan imagery with the "unpoetic" sounds of simple and unrehearsed speech. Occasionally, direct address becomes the speaker's choice for the expression of recrimination, recrimination tempered, however, by "wavering," resulting finally in a subtle shift in the meaning of the refrain and thus of the entire poem. The shifts, the subtlety, the sense of what is only tentative within a framework of "strong" language--all these poetic effects



are the result of Wyatt's careful handling of language, of his style.

The importance of the refrain in the development of Wyatt's style, and therefore the importance of repetition, should be apparent. Wyatt seems to rely upon the Love-Burden and upon other forms of repetition to carry the weight of logical argument, or to express ironic changes in the speaker's attitude (and thus in the tone of the poem), or even to create tension between the meaning the speaker intended and the meaning actually revealed through irony or innuendo.

While the plainspeaking lover of Wyatt's poetry professes to counter the lady's duplicity with his own faithful devotion and loving kindness, his anger and resentment at being ill-treated are never very far beneath the surface. Pushed too far, he will blurt out the truth and reveal his painful knowledge of life's adversities--love lost or tarnished, hopes crushed by the willful cruelty of others, or, worse still, by chance. Faced with such disappointment, he struggles against cynicism--relying on the faith that goodness must finally be rewarded--and against corruption. To preserve his integrity, he must protect himself from the changes that can accompany continued defeat.

Wyatt's choice of the plain style is consistent with his choice of conduct in life. And as we go on to examine his satires, letters, and prose translation, The Guyete of Mynde, we will see that the lover of Wyatt's lyric poetry who searches for the peace of mind that could come from mutual trust and devotion in love is close in spirit to the plain-speaking poet who finds life in King Henry's court troublesome indeed.

## CHAPTER V

### THE UNQUIET MIND: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANSWER

The question of how best to survive the dangers of troublesome change in this mutable world seems to have caused Wyatt more than a little anguish, as his poetry, letters, and life history indicate. Answers were forthcoming from philosophers in any number of rational arguments and implicit in example, as in that of Wyatt's own admirable father, whose courage and devotion enabled him to endure imprisonment and torture during the difficult period before the Duke of Richmond came to the throne as Henry VII. But the application of those answers to life's actual crises was more difficult than one would hope.

One such rational answer could be found in Petrarch's De remediis, which Wyatt read in 1527 after his return from Italy, with the intention of translating Book II, the remedy of ill fortune, for Queen Catherine of Aragon. He was eventually to turn from Petrarch's long and tedious work to Budé's Latin translation of Plutarch's shorter De tranquillitate et securitate animi, but the subject matter of the two is essentially the same, and the

main message in Petrarch, "that good and ill fortune alike must be met with philosophical detachment and self-control, is as Plutarchian as the strongly rational conduct of the argument."<sup>1</sup> While the Rime, undoubtedly read by Wyatt during the same period, and De remediis appear to be directly contradictory, they are nevertheless related. In De remediis Petrarch describes in serious Latin prose the rational ideal, while in the Rime he vividly illustrates the irrational reality. The basic attitudes of the works appear to be irreconcilable, but all the same the writings reveal a close relationship. The Petrarchan lover cannot "keep the stiff upper lip of the Stoic, but weeps and wails like Sorrow in De remediis," becoming "the victim of circumstance and so of himself, for it is on inner perturbation and weakness of will that Petrarch's highly introspective poetry dwells."<sup>2</sup>

Even though the Petrarchan lover seems to have more in common with Plutarch's fool than with his philosopher, he does possess the "philosopher's self-knowledge and power to analyze the reasons for his disquiet."<sup>3</sup> And,

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<sup>1</sup>Patricia Thomson, "Sir Thomas Wyatt: Classical Philosophy and English Humanism," Huntington Library Quarterly, XXV (February, 1962), 83.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 94-95.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

as Patricia Thomson notes, self-knowledge and the ability to analyze are frequently evident in the original love poetry, where Wyatt's "recurrent theme is frustration, that inward fretting at adversity that must keep a man so far from peace of mind."<sup>1</sup> It is Miss Thomson's view that Wyatt's

contact with Catherine, if momentary, is a far more substantial thing than his supposed liason with Anne Boleyn. Anne has lent to a few of Wyatt's love poems an air of mere notoriety. Catherine gave him a task. Anne was not to become a patroness of learning. Had Catherine not lost her influence at court at the moment when Wyatt, aged twenty-four, was coming forward, the direction of his literary career might have been different.<sup>2</sup>

Different? Perhaps. More distinguished? One wonders.

Miss Thomson's view appears to be based on the notion that Anne Boleyn's significance is only a minor historical one, and that those poems which may indeed express Wyatt's love for her are interesting to a gossip, perhaps, but not to a serious student of Wyatt's poetry. It is difficult to believe, however, that Wyatt's "momentary" contact with Queen Catherine could really be more substantial than the complex relationship with Anne--or with any other woman--which he so consistently uses as the basis for whatever personal insight into the mind of the lover his poetry

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

reveals. And, of course, whatever Anne's particular impact on the poetry may have been, the impact of the Rime is clearly a powerful one. Poem after poem reveals Wyatt's admiration for Petrarch and his desire to emulate him in his own poetry. If first attempting to translate Petrarch's De remediis and then finally translating Plutarch in The Quyeté of Mynde taught Wyatt anything, it seems to have made him even more fully aware of the very special world the lover inhabits and aware, too, of Petrarch's great skill in re-creating that world in the Rime.

For it is not that one influence--Queen Catherine's or Anne Boleyn's--is more substantial than the other, but that both influences, one drawing him to read classical and humanistic literature, and one providing perhaps the personal experience which impelled him to write love poetry, brought Wyatt to a clearer understanding of himself and of his life. Thus, rather than separate the love lyrics from the other works--about as futile a separation as that of the imitations from the original verse--we should view them as an integral part of the whole. For a closer look at Quyeté of Mynde and at the satires and letters to his son reveals that throughout Wyatt's career he was well aware of the rational principles that could guide one's life to fulfillment and peace. But such principles were not always easy to follow. In fact, they may not always

have seemed desirable to follow.

The main themes of The Quyete of Mynde are familiar ones, found in Wyatt's other work as well: be honest and thus avoid the pangs of conscience, be stoical and thus avoid the pain of disappointment, forget past difficulties and remember the good in order to avoid fruitless misery, and, finally, turn inwardly for satisfaction and contentment. All of Wyatt's writing stresses, too, the importance of individual thought and action--the power of the individual to decide what is right or what is true, and then to act rationally, or at least attempt to do so, in the light of that understanding.

Even the plain style of the prose translation Quyete of Mynde is consistent with Wyatt's other work, as is Wyatt's view of the reader's responsibility. Thus, he addresses the reader of Plutarch: "As for the straunge names stycke nat in them/for who that can take no frute in it/without he knowe clerely euery tale that is here touched/I wolde he shulde nat rede this boke."<sup>1</sup> This is very much in the spirit of his free imitation of Petrarch's Rime cv, in "Me list no more to sing" (No. CCX):

Yf this be undre miste,  
And not well playnlye wyste,  
Vndrestonde me who lyst;

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<sup>1</sup>Muir and Thomson, p. 440. The Quyete of Mynde is printed from the facsimile of the copy in the Huntington Library.

For I reke not a bene,  
I wott what I doo mean (p. 217).

As we noted in Chapter IV, Wyatt's use of obscurity and innuendo in his poetry requires the reader's sympathetic understanding and imaginative response. He seems to wish his reader to read him as he reads Petrarch, in a highly personal and imaginative way. Plutarch, too, seems to be concerned primarily with what is most crucial to the understanding of his reader, saying, "And (as I thynke) in such declaration thou sekess nat the delicacy of sayeng/ and the piked delight of spech/and thou hast consyderatyon onely of some doctryne/to be as helpe for the lyfe to be ordered" (p. 441).

Since Quyete of Mynde was written in 1527, a very early date in Wyatt's career, all the lyric poetry--and the satirical poetry, too--that follows was clearly written with the knowledge of these themes and principles for living a sane life. This fact gives to the love poetry a particular poignancy, revealed over and over again in individual poems, which it might otherwise lack. The lover of Wyatt's poetry knows better than anyone else how fruitless and self-destructive his behavior really is. Consequently, his complaints against the lady are also complaints against himself, and the complexity that arises from the speaker's sense of responsibility, not



only to others, but to himself, is beautifully dramatized.

The love poems are full of the expression of the restless life, the wearied mind, the madness of love that leads one from a sane--and notably calm--life. In No. LXXIII, for example, "Hevyn and erth and all that here me plain," the sixth stanza illustrates the lover's dilemma:

Save of your grace only to stay my liff,  
That fleith as fast as clowd afore the wynde;  
For syns that first I entred in this stryff  
An inward deth hath fret my mynde, my mynd" (p. 55).

In "So vnwarely was never no man cawght" (No. CXCI), the lover needs his beloved's "helpe to helth" so that "Thys restles lyff I may nott lede" (p. 203). In No. CCXXIII, too, "Mye love toke skorne my servise to retain," the lover claims that his "doting" days are past, "For as there is a certeyne tyme to rage,/ So ys there tyme suche madnes to asswage" (p. 227).

But the problem, of course, lies in the difficulty of turning madness into sanity. The various ways in which Wyatt's lover seeks to extricate himself from his entanglements reveal--just as his emotional responses and attitudes do--a painful understanding of the difficulty of adhering to principles of honesty and goodness. One of the best examples of the way in which Wyatt is able to dramatize such difficulty is "What rage is this?" (No. CI):

What rage is this? What furour of what kynd?  
 What powre, what plage, doth wery thus my mynd?  
 Within my bons to rancle is assind  
     What poyson, plesant swete?

Lo, se myn iyes swell with contynuall terys;  
 The body still away sleples it weris;  
 The fode nothing my faintyng strenght reperis,  
     Nor doth my lyms sustayne.

In diepe wid wound the dedly strok doth torne  
 To curid skarre that neuer shall retorne.  
 Go to, tryumphe, reioyse thy goodly torne,  
     Thi frend thow dost opresse.

Opresse thou dost, and hast off hym no cure,  
 Nor yett my plaint no pitie can procure,  
 Fiers tygre fell, hard rok withowt recure,  
     Cruell rebell to love!

Ons may thou love, neuer belovffd agayne;  
 So love thou still and not thy love obttayne;  
 So wrathfull love with spites of just disdayne  
     May thret thy cruell hert (pp. 83-84).

The lover's agony, the "plage" that besets him, is so great that he is forced finally to strike blow for blow. Here is no gentle, pleading lover; instead he will turn the rage of love against his hard-hearted "beloved" and condemn her in the last stanza--in language that suggests the strict formality of a legal decree--to a just punishment. How far he is from quiet of mind! He is hardly following Plutarch's advice to " . . . consyder well/how beastly it is to suffre our self to be any thyng wrath or angry/if they that we haue delt with all do nat gentlylly & kyndly with vs" (p. 447). The love lyrics reveal that, beastly though it may be, Wyatt's speaker

can never refrain from charging his unkind lady with her serious breach of faith.

"What rage is this?" is followed in the Egerton Manuscript by No. CII, Wyatt's imitation of Petrarch: "From thought to thought from hill to hill love doth me lede,/ Clene contrary from restfull lyff thes comon pathes I trede" (p. 84). This fragment sounds the theme of all Wyatt's work. The lover's "thought" keeps him from "restfull lyff," bringing him from hill to hill, in short, leading him nowhere. It is not love, but his thoughts in response to love that imprison him. Throughout Wyatt's poetry it is the life of the mind that matters, for it is only this life over which we have any control. In the mutable world, circumstance, fortune, luck are all beyond our power to influence. But the mind can respond to the wonders and misfortunes of this world as it chooses to.

In Quyete of Mynde, Plutarch advises the reader to train his mind so that its responses will be reliable, constant, and thus a source of security to the individual who, buffeted though he may be by the misfortunes of life, can then control his responses to such ills, and can therefore create his own contentment when the world outside himself withholds pleasure or reward. The Plutarchian

answer is clear: "Therefore the well of surete of the minde/springing in our self/let vs assay to make most pure & clere/that those thinges that gyue vs foren thinges & chaunceable/we may make mete & according/in suffring with gret vprightnesse of the mynde" (p. 445). Nor is it enough to meet misfortune with uprightness of the mind; the really wise man is able to turn fortune's ills to suit himself, "For trewly it accordeth nat to be wroth agayn thynges that chaunce amisse. for our angre nothyng pertayneth to them. but he that can amend by craft yll chaunces/he trewly doth more laudably" (p. 445).

A mind that can exert such control is our most valuable possession, as Plutarch reminds us when he recounts Socrates' response to his judges:

tho fortune might ouerthrow hym with dyuers sicknesses/take from him his riches or accuse hym to a tyrant/or to the people/yet might she nat truely make hym yll/or faynt herted/or fearfull/or altred of his mynde/or els make hym malicyous/but onely a good man/endued with manlynnesse and corage of the mynde/& at a worde she might nat bereue him the right order of the mynde/whiche truely profiteth more to man/for the ledyng of the lyfe/than the craft of sayling/for to passe the sees (p. 459).

But it is difficult for the outraged, rejected lover to keep from being "malicyous," as "What rage is this?" so vividly dramatizes for us. How can the lover keep from seeking revenge, from returning hurt for hurt? The advice of Plutarch is simple--resolve to be good and

then adhere to this principle:

It can no wyse be sayde/whyle I lyue this I wyll  
nat suffre/lette it be so/but this I may saye whyle  
I lyue/this I wyll nat do/I wyl nat lye/I wyll vse  
no crafty deceites for to compasse men/I wyll nat  
begyle/I wyll nat disceitfully lye in awayte (p. 461).

Such a resolution will help a man achieve peace of mind because "in which maner lyke as botches be in the body/so is a naughty conscience in the soule/as that that leueth repentaunce/busely prickyng and pulling the minde" (p. 461). The power of the conscience is so great that "where all other heuinesses ar wont to be taken away by reason/onely this repentaunce it selfe prouoketh by shame/as one that byteth and gnaweth hym self" (p. 461).

That Wyatt not only translated such sentiments, but took them to heart is clearly demonstrated by his letters to his son, letters that seem at times to be stern moral epistles rather than simply loving advice to help his son avoid the mistakes he himself has made. In the letter written in April of 1537, Wyatt distinguishes for his son the difference between true honesty and that which only passes for honesty in a world of hypocrites:

And here I call not honestye that men comenly cal honestye, as reputation for riches, for authoritie, or some like thing, but that honesty that I dare well say your Grandfather (whos soule god pardon) had rather left to me then all the lands he did leaue me--that was wisdome, gentlenes,

sobrenes, disire to do good, frendlines to get the love of manye, and trougth above all the rest.<sup>1</sup>

And of these virtues, Wyatt continues, "the chiefest" is the dread and reverence of God, "wherapon shall ensue the eschewing of the contraries of thes sayd vertues,--that is to say, Ignorans, unkindnes, Raschnes, desire of harme, unquiet enmytie, hatred, manye and crafty falshed, the verie Rote of al shame and dishonestye."<sup>2</sup>

And how is one to keep his dread of God and of God's punishment? Plutarch simply tells his reader to resolve to be good, or his conscience will suffer. But Wyatt, as we have seen so frequently in the love poetry--in both his original poems and in the imitations--puts a greater emphasis on how one can develop a conscience that will be a reliable and steady reminder of our wrongdoing. For Wyatt, it is always the cause and effect relationship that matters most. He tells his son to imagine himself to be in the presence of honest men and to

remember what shame it wer afore thes men to doo naughtily. And sure this imagination shal cause you remember that the pleasure of a naughty deed is sone past, and that rebuke, shame, and the note therof shal remayne euer. Then if thes things ye take for vayne imagination, yet remember that it is certayn and no imagination that ye are alwaye in the presens and sight of god. . . .<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Muir, Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-39.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

So concerned is Wyatt that his son develop the sensitivity to moral questions he desires for him that in his second letter as well, he comes back to the point of conscience:

No doubt in any thing you doo, if you axe your self or examine the thing for your self afore you do it, you shal find, if it be euill, a repining against it. My son, for our lords love, kepe wel that repining: suffer it not to be darkid and corruptid by noughty example, as tho any thing were to you excusable bicaus othir men doo the same.<sup>1</sup>

These are obviously very high standards of conduct, and there can be no question of how seriously Wyatt took this advice to be. He will do his part as a father, he tells his son, and his son must do his part in following the advice.

But it is extremely difficult for the forlorn lover, who sees those around him prospering in their cruelty or deceit, to be as honest and as good as he knows he should be. Yet if he fails and behaves badly, his concept of good and proper behavior serves to remind him that he has not only failed in love but has failed as well to live up to standards of conduct he sets for himself. Finding that he is the dupe of others, however, will occasionally so embitter the lover that he wishes to strike out and do others harm. He may be so hardened by his unhappy love that he not only seeks to revenge himself upon his

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

mistress, but to pass on his misery to other would-be lovers. In "To Rayle or geste" (No. CCXI), for example, the lover concludes:

But like rewarde let other lovers have;  
That is to saye, for seruys true and faste,  
To long delaies and changing at the laste (p. 217).

If such a lover can still hear the voice of his conscience, he will eventually feel little satisfaction for having relieved himself of his woes in this way.

Even more cynical is the speaker of "There was never ffile half so well filed" (No. XVI):

There was never ffile half so well filed  
To file a file for every smythes intent,  
As I was made a filing instrument  
To frame othre while I was begiled.  
But reason hath at my follie smyled  
And pardoned me syns that I me repent  
Of my lost yeres and tyme myspent,  
For yeuth did me lede and falshode guyled.  
Yet this trust I have of full great aperaunce:  
Syns that decept is ay retourneable  
Of very force it is aggreable;  
That therewithall be done the recompence.  
Then gile begiled plained should be never  
And the reward litle trust for ever (p. 14).

The speaker's own innocence--or ignorance--has made him the unwitting tool of others, and now, having realized the way in which he has been exploited, he is in a position to respond to this revelation. He can, of course, simply repent the sins of his youth, as he does in "Ffarewell, Love, and all thy lawes for ever" (No. XIII), but here repentance is not enough. He wishes to have some meager



satisfaction for having suffered, satisfaction that comes to him as he envisions the future "begiling" that will entrap others like himself. His newfound "worldliness" becomes harsh cynicism: since there is no way to rid the world of deceit, then, good, let the deceivers be deceived, "And the reward litle trust for ever." The speaker has allowed himself to be transformed into a manipulator as coldly calculating and cynical as the one who originally made him "a filing instrument." Far from wishing for a perfect world, the lover, having been badly used, can now sit back and relish the use of others less worldly-wise than himself.

Even when he simply tries to free himself from his painful entanglement without wishing his torture on anyone else, the lover finds the task of breaking his bonds incredibly difficult. In "Alas the greiff" (No. V), for example, he finds himself in a situation where he must abandon his love, but it will almost destroy him to do so:

But though I sterue and to my deth still morne,  
 And pece mele in peces though I be torne,  
 And though I dye, yelding my weried goost,  
 Shall never thing again make me retorne:  
 I qwite th'entreprise of that that I have lost  
 To whome so euer lust for to proffer moost (p. 4).

And sometimes he cannot seem to extricate himself at all, no matter how hard he tries or how painful the experience. In "Who so list to hounte" (VII), imitated from Petrarch,

the lover admits:

Yet may I by no meanes my weried mynde  
 Drawe from the Diere: but as she fleeth afore,  
 Faynting I folowe. . . (p. 5).

Such a lover can hardly take Plutarch's advice. He may be aware of the rational ideal, but the nature of love contradicts rationality. What is especially significant is that this lover suffers far more from the experience of unhappy love than does his less philosophical or "learned" counterpart, who may abandon himself to love's "madness" with no thought of how far he brings himself from peace of mind.

One of the problems the lover must face again and again is that of how best to protect himself from the painful disappointment he experiences in love. Plutarch recommends a stoical indifference, but, after all, indifference is inimical to love. The last line of "What wourde is that that chaungeth not" (No. L), "It is my helth eke and my sore" (p. 36), is not simply a fanciful Petrarchan paradox. If the lover's experience brings him pain, it also brings him--at times--an incredible joy, and he is not eager to forgo the joy in order to avoid the suffering. The lover who wishes to have the pleasure of love returned, or even to have the somewhat mixed pleasure of love unrequited, but deeply felt, must risk the misery of love lost. And in taking the risk, of course, he defies

Plutarch's teaching, for only in risking little can we manage to lose little. How different is the advice of Plutarch:

For truly vehement appetit of any thing/hath alway fere his fellow of lesing it/that dulleth the gladnes/ & maketh it more to be desyred/as whan flame is resisted with gret wind. whom truly reson hath taught assuredly & vnferfully thus to say to fortun/ if thou gyue it I shalbe rigt glad/if thou take it agayn/I shalbe indifferent. this man than can thus vse him self/without marueyle must nedes vse thinges that happen plesantly/and nat be pulled from thens with feare of that losse rennyng in the thought (p. 457).

To illustrate the value of such advice, Plutarch offers the reader the example of Anaxagoras, who, after hearing of his son's death, said

I knewe . . . whan I begote him that he shuld dye/& I haue suffred ouer that awayting. this affection of Anaxagoras/is asmoche to be folowed of vs/as wondred at. Surely we may stay forthwith ech misfortun/I knew I had slypper riches/nat nayled with sixe peny nayl/as they say in my possession/and that I had them/but to vse them. I knewe wele inough that they that gaue me power/myght also take it from me (p. 457).

The behavior of Anaxagoras is indeed to be wondered at. But should it in fact be emulated by all men? Should a parent suffer over the thought of the inevitable death of his child, or should he relish his child's life? Can a lover remain indifferent to loss and still be a lover? Plutarch himself appears to admit that differences exist among men, insisting that

contempt & dispisynge/is a great instrument for the beginnyng of philosophy/and almost the first and cheyfst exercyse of it. So al thinges is nat for euery man/but he that wyll obey the poesy of Appollo/must first knowe him self/and so take aduyse of his owne nature/& as she ledeth to take an order of lyfe/rather than passyng from one to another/to force & constrayn his nature (p. 454).

Just as the poet must know himself and experience life, the lover, who creates love in the way an artist conceives and forms his works of art, must give way to life's passions. How can a lover expect little and at the same time give all? He can be a philosopher, perhaps, as the former lover of "There was never ffile half so well filed" fancies he has become.

In The Quyete of Mynde Plutarch envisions the man who follows his advice as being in a position to say,

I haue preuented the/o fortune/and all thy entres were they neuer so streyte I haue stopte/this man nat with berres/nor nayles/nor byldinges hath coraged and strengthed hym selfe/but rather with decrees of philosophy/and rules of wisemen/whiche also be open & so redy for euery man/that they nede but only the takynge (p. 460).

Such rules may be open to every man, but to those who would feel deeply, as the Petrarchan lover chooses to do, or must do, they are of little use. The decrees of philosophy may promote serenity through constraint of the passionate thoughts that plague the lover, but they cannot give him the lover's pleasure. And such rules contradict the very "law of love" which the Petrarchan

lover may complain ensnares him, but which, nevertheless, he has chosen to accept. The great complexity that arises in Wyatt's love poetry comes precisely from this contradiction. Wyatt's lover is too critical, too demanding to remain silent when he is badly treated by "love," and yet he is too desirous of loving and of being loved to abandon his pursuit altogether. Thus we so frequently find the bittersweet response or the ironic touch. When such a lover tries to accept stoical wisdom and to live according to its rules, he discovers that this is not a particularly satisfying solution either. In No. XXXIX, he hopes that stoic patience will see him through his difficulties:

Patience, though I have not  
 The thing that I require,  
 I must of force, god wot,  
 Forbere my moost desire:  
 For no ways can I fynde  
 To saile against the wynde.

Patience, do what they will  
 To worke me woo or spite,  
 I shall content me still  
 To thyncke boeth day and nyte,  
 To thyncke and hold my peace,  
 Syns there is no redresse.

Patience, withouten blame,  
 For I offended nought;  
 I knowe they knowe the same,  
 Though they have chaunged their thought.  
 Was ever thought so moved  
 To hate that it haith loved?

Patience of all my harme,  
 For fortune is my foo;  
 Patience must be the charme  
 To hele me of my woo;  
 Patience, withoute offence,  
 Is a painfull patience (p. 29).

This appears to be another variation of the love-situation dramatized in Wyatt's imitation of Petrarch, "Perdy I sayd hytt nott" (No. CLVIII). Patience would surely seem to be the stoical, courageous response to fortune's ills, or to his beloved's hatred, but the lover's own knowledge of his innocence and of his worthiness is not enough to satisfy him. It is small comfort when he continues to be tormented. Uneasiness, and a nagging resentment, rather than quiet of mind, result. It is impossible for Wyatt's lover to really hold his peace, even if he fully realizes "there is no redresse."

At times, Wyatt's love poems reveal a speaker who does not even try to be restrained or stoical. Instead, he gives way completely to his grief, as in LXXXVIII:

I lede a liff vnpleasant, nothing glad;  
 Crye and complaynt offerre, voydes Joyfullnesse;  
 So chaungethe vnrest that nought shall fade;  
 Payne and dyspyte hathe altered plesantnes  
 Ago, long synnys, that she hathe truly made,  
 Disdayne for trowght sett lyght yn stedfastnes,  
 I haue cause goode to syng this song:  
 Playne or reioyse, who felythe wele or wrong (p. 70).

And in No. LXXXIX the speaker carries his excess of grief even further, claiming that it is not even possible to

suffer more than he does:

Yf in the world ther be more woo  
 Then I haue yn my harte,  
 Wher so ytt is itt doithe come fro,  
 And in my brest there doithe itt groo,  
 For to encrease my smarte.  
 Alas I ame recepte of euery care  
 And of my liff eche sorrow claymes his part.  
 Who list to lyue in quyetnes  
 By me lett hym beware,  
 For I by highe dysdayne  
 Ame made withoute redresse;  
 And vnkyndenes, alas, hath slayne  
 My poore trew hart all comfortles (p. 70).

The lover's awareness of the rational ideal, and, at the same time, his all-too pitiful state combine to give the poem its poignant effect. Instead of simply accepting the speaker's complaint as the appropriate response to his misery, we also are aware--as Wyatt surely was--that his response reveals how completely lacking in good sense this poor fellow is. He even offers himself as a negative example, "Who list to lyue in quyetnes/ By me lett hym beware." But it is not only "highe dysdayne" and "vnkyndenes" that have caused him to be comfortless now. His own refusal--or inability--to control his feelings causes him the greatest pain of all.

In still another poem (No. XCII) that seems to be once more an uncontrolled expression of grief, the speaker turns from his complaint and sees his misfortunes--probably Wyatt's personal reference to his imprisonments in

May of 1534 and 1536--in a new light:

You that in love finde lucke and habundance  
 And live in lust and joyful jolitie,  
 Arrise for shame! do away your sluggardie:  
 Arise, I say, do May some obseruance!  
 Let me in bed lye dreming in mischaunce;  
 Let me remembre the happs most vnhappy  
 That me betide in May most commonly,  
 As oon whome love list litil to avaunce.  
 Sephame saide true that my natiuitie  
 Mischaunced was with the ruler of the May:  
 He gest I prove of that the veritie.  
 In May my welth and eke my liff I say  
 Have stoude so oft in such perplexitie:  
 Reioyse! let me dreame of your felicitie (p. 73).

Here the speaker's mood, his determination to indulge in self-pity, gives way to "Reioyse! let me dreame of your felicitie," revealing that now he places his woes in a different perspective. Just as we are about to chide him, he recognizes the futility and pain of reliving his unhappiness and will now "dreame" of "felicitie." He is aware it is a "dreame"--he has chosen the word, but nonetheless, it is this dream or the reality of "perplexitie." He chooses consciously to dream and is thus aware of both his earlier self-indulgence and of his escape now into the fantasy of the joy that others feel. In realizing the hopefulness and wonder of spring, no matter how greatly such a new Maytime contrasts with his own experience in that season, he seems to be taking the advice of the philosopher of Quyete of Mynde who tells us:



For this worlde is a certeyne most holy temple/&  
 most mete for god/in to this temple man is admytted  
 whan he is borne/nat to beholde karuyn ymages  
 wantyng senses/but the son/the mone/& the sterres/  
 from whiche cometh mouyng/& the first principles  
 of lyfe/whiche prouidence hath gyuen vnto vs to  
 beholde/that they shulde be sensyble ymages and  
 folowynges of intelligible thynges/as Plato saith.  
 besydes these/the flodes that bring forthe alwayes  
 newe waters/and the erth producyng fode/bothe vnto  
 trees & vnto all kynde of bestes. with this good-  
 lyness & prospecte begynnyng truely our lyfe/it must  
 be full of surety and of ouerspred gladsomnesse/. . .  
 (p. 462).

Such a philosophical turning from personal misfortune  
 to the natural wonders and joys of the world seems  
 evident, too, in No. CCXLI, one of Wyatt's loveliest  
 poems:

Luckes, my faire falcon, and your fellowes all,  
 How well pleasaunt yt were your libertie!  
 Ye not forsake me that faire might ye befall.  
 But they that somtyme lykt my companye  
 Like lyse awaye from ded bodies thei crall:  
 Loe what a profe in light aduersytie!  
 But ye my birdes, I swear by all your belles,  
 Ye be my fryndes, and so be but few elles (p. 241).

This poem, probably written before or during Wyatt's  
 last imprisonment,<sup>1</sup> expresses themes common to all of  
 Wyatt's work: the importance of faithfulness, the nature  
 of true friendship, the joy of liberty, and the disillusionment  
 that follows when faithfulness, friendship (or  
 love), and liberty are lacking.

It would seem that in poems expressing a response  
 to misfortunes other than those in love, the answer or

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<sup>1</sup>Muir and Thomson, Commentary, p. 431.

attitude is more frequently a philosophical one. In the love poems, however, answers provided by philosophical thought seem not to apply, either because the lover's involvement has left his mind too bewildered for him to even think straight, or because he is reluctant to apply the wise man's doctrine if that doctrine would insist that he abandon his pursuit of love, something he finds almost impossible to do.

The Quyetete of Mynde reveals the philosopher's concern not only with our ability to endure present misfortune, but also with our ability to control our thoughts of the past and of the future in such a way that we can avoid useless misery and prepare ourselves for future disappointments. Plutarch finds foolish indeed the "busy felowe" he chides: "To what purpose good man doest thou consyder so diligently thy harmes/ & renews them alwayes with busy remembraunce/and hast no regarde to that welfulnesse that is present" (p. 448).

It is madness, he argues, to be sorry for things lost

nat reioysing in thinges that be safe. And as  
lytell chyl dren/whan one hath taken from them one  
tryfle among many/castyng away al the rest/they  
wepe and crye. so lykewise we troubled by fortune  
in one thyng complayning and lamentyng make all  
other thynges to vs vnprofytable (p. 449).

Yet the lover of Wyatt's poetry is guilty of precisely this foolishness. He constantly turns his thoughts to

the past, as in No. XXVII, an imitation of Petrarch, "Though I my self be bridilled of my mynde,/ Retorning me backewerd by force expresse. . ." (p. 21). Such a lover recognizes his self-destructive behavior, but he is so tormented by his past failures or struggles that he cannot keep his mind from dwelling on them. Therefore, neither final loss of love nor new success brings release from the lover's misery because the remembrance of former feeling and its accompanying pain will cause the lover to continue to lament his loss or to be overly cautious or skeptical, and thus uneasy, in his new relationship. The memory of earlier disappointment may cause the lover to acknowledge sadly that since his past efforts were misguided and foolish, his new pursuit is perhaps equally dangerous. Just as the rejected lover in Wyatt may occasionally cling to the sweeter memories of his past affairs, as in "They fle from me," the currently successful one is usually unprotected from assault by the memories of his earlier disasters. But his experience of those disasters will not save him from new error. He seems in fact never to be able to use his past profitably, and thus he becomes an almost perfect example of the foolish man Plutarch criticizes:

But they that contayn nat thynges passed/as tho  
memory failed/nor again remembreth them/they do  
nat now in wordes/but in very dede/make them selfe  
dayly more nedy & more voyde/gapyng alwayes on

to morowe/as tho thinges of last yere/of late/&  
 of yesterday/perteyned nothing to them/& as tho  
 thei had neuer chaunced vnto them. So that the  
 constant state of the mynd/by this maner is  
 troubled. And euyne as flyes slyp of whan they  
 crepe vpon smoth glasses/& in rough & rugged  
 places thei cleue esely/so men slyding from  
 gladsome and plesant thinges/holde fast the  
 remembraunce of heuy thynges (p. 456).

Ironically, for the lover in Wyatt's poetry, the past serves only to spoil the present rather than to prepare him reasonably for the future. In short, he does exactly the opposite of that recommended by rational philosophy:

But truly for to kepe constancy of mynde in  
 aduersite/it is of great effect/nat to forgete  
 with a wynkyng eye (as they say) those thynges  
 that somtyme hath happened hapely vnto vs/as we  
 wolde haue wysshed/and with due medlyng to way  
 the prosperous thynges/with euery yll chaunce (p. 448).

Rather than recall such happy events, allowing this recollection to help us put present misfortune into proper perspective, we instead "tourne our mynde to heuy thynges/and by force constrayne it to the remembraunce of thinges most of repentaunce/and we pull it away agayn the wyll of it/from agreable and suffrable thinges" (p. 448).

But Wyatt's lover explains his special predicament--of having nothing but ill chance to remember--in the third stanza of No. LII ("Marvail no more"):

Perdy, there is no man,  
 If he never sawe sight,  
 That perfaictly tell can  
 The nature of the light;  
 Alas, how should I then  
 That never tasted but sowre  
 But do as I began  
 Continuelly to lowre? (p. 38).

Even more ironic perhaps is the fact that even while he is plagued by memories of his past misfortunes, the lover is also deceived by false hope for the future, dramatically revealed in "My hope, Alas, hath me abused" (No. LXII), where in the last two stanzas the lover explains the logical cause of his present dismay:

Sometyme delight did tune my song,  
And led my hert full pleasauntly;  
And to my self I saide among:  
My happe is commyng hastely.  
But it hath happed contrary;  
Assuraunce causeth my distres,  
And I remain all comfortles.

Then if my note now do vary  
And leve his wonted pleasauntnes,  
The hevy burden that I cary  
Hath alterd all my Joyefulnes.  
No pleasure hath still stedfastnes,  
But hast hath hurt my happenes,  
And I remain all comfortles (p. 46).

Plutarch warns of the danger of too-high expectations, of the "assuraunce" the lover refers to here, since it will surely lead us to terrible disappointment:

For of trouth it breketh marueylously the constant  
& quyet state of the mynde/with hyer entent to  
stryue aboue the power to get any thing as to sayle  
with gretter sayles than proporcion/as whan hope  
shyneth neuer so lytell/promysing folisshly vnto  
our selves vnmesurable and great thynges/& than  
whan chaunce foloweth nat/we accuse wicked fortune  
and our desteny/whan rather we shulde dam our  
selves of foly/as it were to be angry with fortune/  
that thou canst nat shote an arowe with a plou/. . .  
(p. 452).

The lover of "My hope, Alas, hath me abused" sees that

he is responsible for his distress, but his present acknowledgment of the proper cause and effect relationship could not have prevented his past error, and it seems unlikely that it will actually keep him from having unrealistic expectations once again. The love poetry is filled with the successive errors of the lover, who frequently has considerable insight into the cause of his unhappiness, but who cannot seem to break the pattern he discovers. The philosophical explanation of the tendency to create false hope seems reasonable enough: "Surely the cause of this errour/is the noughti loue of our self. For men/ouer moch deseruing of them self/where as with great stryfe they alowe them selfe best/enhaunced with pride/leauue nothyng vnassayed" (p. 452).

Yet the lover continues to "stryue aboue the power" to win his lady, unattainable though she seems, and naturally he will be distressed when she continues to keep him dangling with words or gestures he usually takes to mean "wait a while." And so he will "abide," at least for a time, and if he gives up his pursuit of that coy enchantress, he will soon embark on some new chase. Once he wins his love, his incredibly high expectations betray him all over again, since he assumes she will be as faithful as he is prepared to be. Throughout, he sees himself as "deseruing" far better treatment than he receives.

These insights into the rational, "safe" plan for life, offered by the philosopher, and into the irrational, reckless reality of the lover's existence, so painfully exposed by the lover himself, illuminate both the love lyrics and the prose translation. These "reflections" into the nature of life bounce off one another, shedding light on both in turn. Quyete of Mynde is made to seem sane, perhaps, but distressingly impractical and, in fact, impracticable, while the love poetry dramatizes the unwished-for, but seemingly unavoidable agony the idealistic lover must experience.

Only rarely in the love poems does one find an experience that seems free of both unfortunate recollection and of the nagging fear for the future that is the result of awareness of the dangers of false hope. In No. CXVIII Wyatt reveals such joy:

A face that shuld content me wonders well  
 Shuld not be faire but cumley to behold,  
 Wyth gladsum loke all gref for to expell;  
 With sober chere so wold I that yt shuld  
 Speke withowt wordes, such wordes as non can tell;  
 The tresse also shuld be of cryspyd goold;  
 With wytt, and these myght chance I myght be tyed,  
 And knytt agayne the knott that shuld not slyde  
 (pp. 132-33).

This portrait, perhaps of Elizabeth Darrell, Wyatt's mistress,<sup>1</sup> reveals a mature beauty. There is no concern with superficial traits. All the physical features referred

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<sup>1</sup>Muir and Thomson, Commentary, p. 394.

to signify inward values. Not facial surface beauty, but facial expression capable of "gref for to expell" is praised. Such intimacy and confidence exist that she can speak to him "withowt wordes, such wordes as non can tell." Even the reference to golden hair, which seems at first an unusual touch for Wyatt, who rarely describes the physical details of feminine beauty, has greater significance than is apparent, for the imagery leads him to the final couplet with its suggestion that he envisions their love to last long into the future: "With wytt, and these myght chance I myght be tyed,/ And knytt agayne the knott that shuld not slyde." How different this is from the other love poems. Here is no coy and clever creature, taunting him with promises she will never keep. Instead her "sober chere" will be his great comfort. Not only does he wish to "be tyed" to her; there is no real question in the poem of her ever forsaking him. He takes for granted her love and her steadfastness; thus he is certain of continued love.

Equally rare is a poem that reveals the lover's ability to put misfortune to good use, although it is clear that rational philosophy considers such an ability to be of great importance to a man who wishes to be in control of his life. Quyete of Mynde makes very clear the difference between fools and wise men:



Foles oftentimes whan fortune offreth her ryght  
 hande/vncomely turnyng them selfe/set her on  
 their lyft hande. wyse men do better/that lyke  
 as bees make hony a right swete thing/out of drie  
 tyme/an herbe of very bytre tast/so of very  
 vnhandsome thynges/oft tymes they chuse out some  
 handsome and profytable thynges to them. which  
 thing wolde be moche thought on/& laboured with  
 great exercyse of the mynde (p. 445).

This ability to "mende and turne a nother way fortune/  
 when she chaunceth otherwyse than we wolde" (p. 445) is  
 illustrated in No. XXIII:

In faith I wot not well what to say,  
 Thy chaunces ben so wonderous,  
 Thou fortune, with thy dyvers play  
 That causeth Joy full dolourous,  
 And eke the same right Joyus:  
 Yet though thy chayne hath me enwrapt  
 Spite of thy hap, hap hath well hapt.

Though thou me set for a wounder  
 And sekest thy chaunge to do me payn,  
 Mens myndes yet may thou not order,  
 And honeste, and it remayn,  
 Shall shyne for all thy clowdy rayn;  
 In vayn thou sekest to have trapped:  
 Spite of thy hap, hap hath well happed.

In hindering thou diddest fourther,  
 And made a gap where was a stile;  
 Cruell willes ben oft put vnder,  
 Wenyng to lowre thou diddist smyle.  
 Lorde! how thy self thou diddist begile,  
 That in thy cares wouldest me have lapped!  
 But spite of thy hap, hap hath well happed (p. 19).

Here at last seems to be a speaker who is able to make  
 honey out of thyme after all. Throughout the poem, although  
 there is an expression of great wonder that things could  
 have turned out so well, the speaker's explanation for his

good fortune follows the logic of Quyete of Mynde:

Mens myndes yet may thou not order,  
And honeste, and it remayn,  
Shall shyne for all thy cloudy rayn. . . (p. 19).

He has done precisely what the philosopher would advise: while he may not be able to control fortune, he can use it to his own advantage, and the pleasure he now feels at having been able to "turne" fortune "a nother way" is expressed by marvelous humor at the end of the poem. This time the joke is on fortune. But the response of this poem is rare in Wyatt. The lover more frequently finds himself unable to turn fortune's frowns to smiles, and the majority of love lyrics reveal a speaker whose mind is "ordered" rather than entirely free. His own basic honesty can seldom save him from the dishonesty of others, nor can it always protect him from the fantasies he creates for himself.

Yet while the love poetry most often reveals the lover's difficulty in keeping his mind from dwelling too consistently on the past adversity he has experienced or from deceiving himself as well about his chances for future success, other poetry reveals Wyatt's persistent belief in the desirability of leading a rational and good life, even though the speakers of the love poems usually find it impossible to reconcile their idealistic

intentions with their behavior.

Especially important to Wyatt are self-knowledge and proper moral values, as No. CCXL, his translation from Seneca's Thyestes, indicates:

Stond who so list vpon the Slipper toppe  
Of courtes estates, and lett me heare reioyce;  
And vse me quyet without lett or stoppe,  
Vnknownen in courte, that hath such brackish loyes.  
In hidden place, so lett my dayes forthe passe,  
That when my yeares be done, withouten noyse,  
I may dye aged after the common trace.  
For hym death greep'the right hard by the crophe  
That is moche knownen of other, and of him self alas,  
Doth dye vnknownen, dazed with dreadfull face (p. 240).

Wishing to die "withouten noyse" "aged after the common trace" is perhaps a grim reminder of Wyatt's familiarity with the fate on the block of those much known in Court. The emphasis on seeking self-knowledge, in "hidden place" if necessary, where one can be free of the distractions and deceptions as well as the "brackish loyes" of courtly life, is apparent also in Wyatt's satires. The content of the satires has prompted Patricia Thomson to claim that of "all Wyatt's work, it is in the satires that his mood is most distinctively classical, philosophical, and humanistic."<sup>1</sup>

The first satire, which was probably written in 1536 after Wyatt's release from the Tower, is reminiscent of The Quyetete of Mynde and its teachings, for Plutarch

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<sup>1</sup>"Sir Thomas Wyatt: Classical Philosophy and English Humanism," p. 93.

refers to Zenon, who, when he heard that his one ship was lost, exclaimed to Fortune, "thou doest very wel with me/ that driues me to myn old cloke/and to the porche of philosophy" (p. 446). This satire, No. CV, which is written in imitation of Alamanni's Satire x,<sup>1</sup> expresses in its opening how little the writer wishes to stand on the "Slipper toppe/ Of courtes estates":

Myne owne John Poyntz, sins ye delight to know  
 The cawse why that homeward I me draw,  
 And fle the presse of courtes wher soo they goo  
 Rather then to lyve thrall vnder the awe  
 Of lordly lookes, wrappid within my cloke,  
 To will and lust lerning to set a lawe,  
 It is not for becawsse I skorne or moke  
 The power of them to whome fortune hath lent  
 Charge over vs, of Right, to strike the stroke;  
 But trew it is that I have allwais ment  
 Less to estime them then the common sort  
 Off owtward thinges that juge in their intent  
 Withowte Regarde what dothe inwarde resort (p. 88).

The speaker goes on to claim that since he cannot lie, or praise falsely, or honor wicked men--in short, cannot conform to the way of the world--he has only one choice:

I cannot, I; no, no, it will not be,  
 This is the cause that I could never yet  
 Hang on their slevis that way as thou maist se  
 A chippe of chaunce more then a pownde of witt.  
 This maketh me at home to hounte and hawke  
 And in fowle weder at my booke to sitt (p. 90).

Finally, sure that the man whom he addresses is as much in sympathy with the Plutarchian ideal as he is, the speaker is able to issue an invitation to his listener:

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<sup>1</sup>For comparison with the original, see Muir and Thomson, Commentary, pp. 347-355.

But here I ame in Kent and Christendome  
 Emong the muses where I rede and ryme;  
 Where if thou list, my Poynz, for to come,  
 Thou shalt be judge how I do spend my tyme (p. 91).

The same emphasis on inner values as opposed to worldly success is found in Wyatt's second satire, No. CVI, which tells the familiar tale of the country mouse lured to the city by false values, only to be caught by the town cat, because she so foolishly "had forgotten her poure suretie and rest/ For semyng welth wherin she thought to rayne" (p. 93). The ambition of this silly creature who "for- bicause her lyvelood was but thynne,/ Would nedes goo seke her townysssh systers howse" (p. 91) is comparable to the far greater ambition Quyete of Mynde criticizes:

For it is nat ynough vnto them to be ryche & eloquent/and amonge mery & gladsome festes. but that they must be famyliers of princes and in auctorite/but that they must haue the best horse & the best dogges and (if god wyll) the best cockerels and quayles/or els they can nat be quiete in their mynde (pp. 452-53).

This poor country mouse wishes only to be free of the "stormy blastes" of her cave and the poverty of "a barly corn, sometyme a bene" in order to enjoy her sister's wealth so that she might "lyve a Lady while her liff doeth last" and have the pleasure of "boyled bacon, meet and roost" and "the licour of the grape." But she is deceived, for this "semyng welth" is not all she had hoped for, and as the storyteller sadly explains:

Alas, my Poynz, how men do seke the best  
 And fynde the wourst by errour as they stray!  
 And no marvaill, when sight is so opprest,  
 And blynde the gyde; anon owte of the way  
 Goeth gyde and all in seking quyete liff.  
 O wretched myndes there is no gold that may  
 Graunt that ye seke, no warre, no peace, no stryff,  
 No, no, all tho thy hed were howpt with gold,  
 Sergeaunt with mace, hawbert, sword, nor knyff  
 Cannot repulse the care that folowe should.  
 Eche kynd of lyff hath with him his disease.  
 Lyve in delight evyn as thy lust would,  
 And thou shalt fynde when lust doeth moost the please  
 It irketh straitte and by it self doth fade (pp. 93-94).

How close this is to the sentiments of Plutarch, who also  
 sees worldly possessions and frivolous enjoyment as being  
 in no way able to compensate for the inner satisfaction  
 that can come from a good life, free of falsehood and from  
 evil deeds:

So nouthur gorgiousnesss of buylding/nor weight  
 of golde/nor noblenesse of kyn/nor greatnesse of  
 empire/nor eloquence & fayre spekyng/brinketh so  
 moch clerenesse of lyfe/and so plesant quietnes/  
 as bringeth a mynde disceuered from trouble of  
 busyness. . . (p. 462).

But to keep his mind "untroubled" a man must be vigilant  
 indeed, for while "in the mynde of a wyse man/honest  
 dedes do euer leue a certeyn fresshe and plesaunt  
 remembraunce" (p. 462), the one who commits an error is  
 continually plagued by the remembrance of his mistake,  
 even when it is the sin of omission, "For to ouerslip  
 honest thinges/is no lesse displesaunt & troublous than  
 (as we haue afore said) to do foule thynges" (p. 443).  
 This is the moral lesson Wyatt attempts to teach his son

in his letters, and it is certainly the lesson the Petrarchan lover learns through his own failure to put that advice to good use.

The necessity of looking inwardly for true satisfaction is nowhere more succinctly expressed than toward the end of the second satire:

And yet the thing that moost is your desire  
 Ye do mysseke with more travaill and care.  
 Make playn thyn hert that it be not knotted  
 With hope or dred and se thy will be bare  
 From all affectes whome vice hath ever spotted;  
 Thy self content with that is the assigned  
 And vse it well that is to the allotted.  
 Then seke no more owte of thy self to fynde  
 The thing that thou haist sought so long before,  
 For thou shalt fele it sitting in thy mynde (p. 94).

Donald M. Friedman appropriately comments that the advice given here to Poyntz, that the "'thing' so long pursued--satisfaction, stability, steadfastness--exists only within the mind itself," is advice that "can be paralleled in any number of the love lyrics, if only implicitly, because again and again Wyatt characterises both the realities of passion and the elaborate rituals of courtly love as assaults upon the mind's integrity."<sup>1</sup> For Wyatt, the mind is not only "the faculty of rational thought," but also "an active source of strength in the battle against temptation and despair, . . . both the toughest armour and

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<sup>1</sup>"The 'Thing' in Wyatt's Mind," p. 376.

the sharpest weapon of the embattled self."<sup>1</sup>

Friedman is convinced that one can trace through all of Wyatt's work his

unillusioned fascination with the idea of a mind secure in its self-knowledge, proof against passion and delusion, maintaining an inviolable core of personal identity against the myriad open and disguised assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil. This, I believe, is the concept he never succeeded in describing more exactly than by calling it "the thing . . . sitting in thy mynde."<sup>2</sup>

Wyatt may not describe it more "exactly" elsewhere, but he does speak of it in different terms. For instance, when he urges his son to "kepe wel that repining: suffer it not to be darkid and corruptid by noughty example,"<sup>3</sup> he is surely referring in still another way to "the thing" in the mind.

Not that Wyatt assumes one will live the easy life in choosing to "kepe wel that repining" and to reject "the world, the flesh, and the devil." For as his conclusion to Satire CVII makes plain, once Sir Francis Brian refuses to accept the satirical advice Wyatt offers him--advice that would require him to be an unscrupulous opportunist--then he must look forward to a "poor" life:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 377.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 380.

<sup>3</sup>Muir, Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt, p. 42.



Nay, then, farewell, and if you care for shame  
 Content the then with honest pouertie  
 With fre tong what the myslikes to blame  
 And for thy trouth sumtyme aduersitie:  
 And therewithall this thing I shall the gyve--  
 In this worould now litle prosperite,  
 And coyne to kepe as water in a syve (p. 97).

But a truthful man could find more than a "little prosperite," for he would have an inner wealth far surpassing the outward show of fortune esteemed by others. An ending such as this one does lend support, though, to Patricia Thomson's belief that Wyatt's moralizing is "peculiarly somber, anxious, and often intensely personal."<sup>1</sup> She argues further, however, that there is also "a suspicion of narrowness, a rather rigid adherence to precept and example, a refusal to rationalize and philosophize. Though he points to example, he is scarcely anecdotal, much less witty."<sup>2</sup>

But while this may be the impression one could receive from his letters to his son, for example, it is certainly not the impression conveyed by the whole of Wyatt's work. Once we include the love poetry in our examination, the "narrowness" disappears. For the love poems consistently reveal that Wyatt looks upon the Petrarchan lover with both sympathy and humor. And this

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<sup>1</sup>"Sir Thomas Wyatt: Classical Philosophy and English Humanism," p. 90.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

understanding, if often ironic response is possible precisely because Wyatt's knowledge of moral principle exists side by side with his appreciation of the lover's experience--an experience that Wyatt could never have created with such remarkable poetic skill had he not carefully and lovingly explored Petrarch's songs and sonnets.

Miss Thomson has noted, quite rightly, that "Wyatt's portrait is not complete without his Classical philosophy and English humanism, even when as the courtly lyricist he is apparently furthest from them."<sup>1</sup> But appearances are not the same as reality, and the distance between the love lyrics and the philosophy or humanism is very short indeed. Whether expressing the positive moral dictum, as in the satires, letters, or The Quyetete of Mynde, or dramatizing, through the negative example of the lover, the difficulty of following that dictum, Wyatt is deeply concerned with the good life. In all of his work he seeks to find a remedy for ill fortune and to preserve the mind's wholeness. While the other writings point the way toward the ideal goal, the love poetry records the continuing struggle of the wearied mind for balance and stability. That the struggle

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

engages our imagination to a greater degree than does the moralizing is easy enough to understand. Wyatt served his poetic apprenticeship under a great master who had himself been preoccupied with that struggle.

Whatever answers philosophy offers, Wyatt reveals in his writing that he knows life is far too complex for any answer to be applied easily and painlessly. Sir Thomas Wyatt seems to have discovered--sometimes painfully, sometimes pleasurably--that "so variable/dyuers and reboundable/is the tune of this worlde/as of an harpe/nor in mortall thynges/is there any thyng that is pure/clere/& symple" (p. 456).

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## APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Susan Eichenfeld Ashton has been read and approved by three members of The Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Anthony LaBonte  
Signature of Adviser

May 21, 1978  
date